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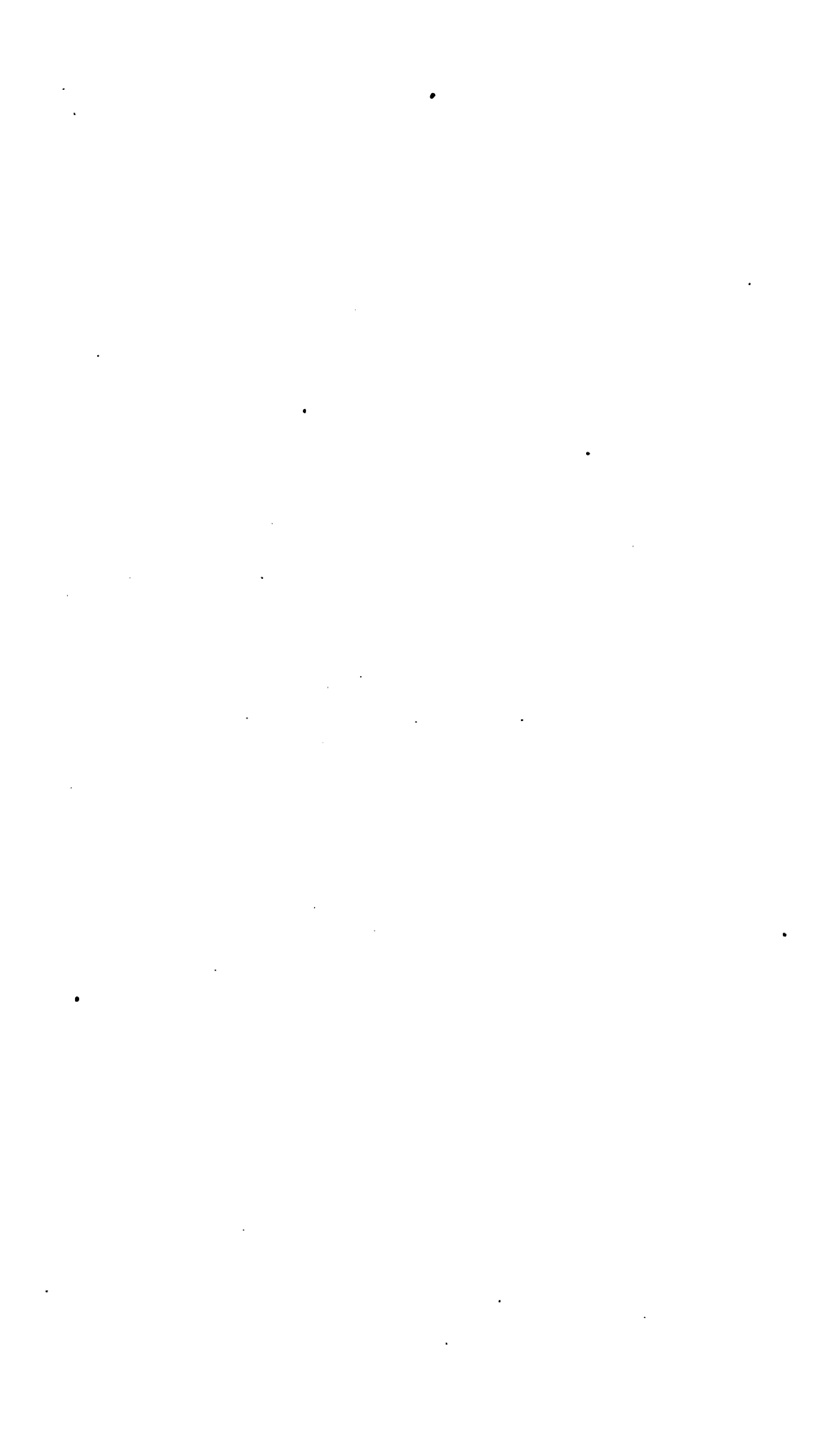
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THE
REVOLT OF FLANDERS.

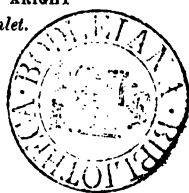
AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY,
IN FIVE ACTS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE "PROHIBITED" COMEDY,

"Richelieu in Love."

"I AM DEAD,
THOU LIV'ST; REPORT ME AND MY CAUSE ARIGHT
TO THE UNSATISFIED."

Hamlet.



LONDON:
HENRY COLBURN, PUBLISHER,
GREAT MARLBOROUGH STREET.

MDCCCXLVIII.

theatralize Mr. Taylor's poetical romance. A subject which, as it exists in its picturesque simplicity in the chronicles of Froissart, seems to act itself so vividly to the mind's eye, that the effects are rather marred than heightened by any attempt to elaborate them.

From those grand old outlines I have rarely departed in the historical action of this Tragedy. The order of events, and not unfrequently the very words of Froissart, are adopted. The suggestions derived from Mr. Taylor's fine work will be readily appreciated. The influence of the volcanic atmosphere of the age may, perhaps, be traced in the dun and sultry hues of the composition. In other respects, I suppose, my originality may be as original as most people's in these latter times—as it is permitted to the gleaners after the great harvesters of the world's poesy to be.

At all events, I had an object in view, which I believed novel. I thought that the chief reason of the cold bas-relief sort of effect which historical subjects in general produce on the stage, arose from the absence of domestic or common interest in them. The froze sublimities of the Alps themselves gain, at least in human interest, when the blue smoke of some crag-built cot arises amidst their vasty solitudes! A domestic interest closely wrought into the historical one, as the vine-suckers into the trellises which support them, and not a thing apart, to be contemplated in separate groups and under opposite lights, I have endeavoured to weave into this subject—I know not with what success, but would learn.

After the prohibition of "*Richelieu in Love*," by an act of censorship which English and foreign critics have only hesitated whether to pronounce more foolishly or unjustly

meddlesome, this picture of an antiquity so closely resembling our own age, though delineated impartially, as a mirror might reflect the groups passing before it, could expect little indulgence. If, however, no revolution happens but such as would have happened whether this drama made its appearance or not, after its publication, this objection on the part of managers—who do not like to go to great expense for nothing—may be removed.

INVOCATION.

SPIRIT! whose world-o'ershadowing plumes are spread,
Now for some flight beyond all omen's fear,
Beyond all onward gaze of Hope!—the Dead
That were thine heralds through so many a year
Of doubt and terror, when thy coming wings
Darkened the Heavens, and men saw not the light,—
Snowy as that which earliest morning flings
Over the gloomy Alps,—silver their night
Of sable pinion! yea, *thy* Dead, O Name,
That should be Thing!—call from their sepulchres,
And bid thee cloud not their unsetting fame,
Proving a vulture shape of blood and tears
Whom they announced—a Dove, whose sky-broad breast
Should brood o'er all the earth, and give it—REST!

APRIL 14, 1848.

Dramatis Personæ.

PHILIP VAN ARTEVELDT, *Son of Jacob, formerly Chief of the revolted Flemings.*

LOIS DE MALE, *Count of Flanders.*

PHŒBUS LE HAZE, *his natural Son.*

VANDENBOSCH, }
FRANS ACKERMAN, } *Captains of the People of Gaunt.*

SIR RAOUL D'HARZELLE, *a Knight, revolted from the Count.*

LORD LAVAL, *a Noble of the Count's party.*

GUISBERT, }
SYMON, } *Citizens of Gaunt, partizans of the Count.*

CHARLES VI. (a Boy), *King of France.*

DUKE OF BURGUNDY, *Regent of France.*

LENOR, *Lady of Ardennes.*

YOLANDE, *Wife to Philip, Daughter of Vandebosch.*

Deacons of the Trades, Soldiers, Rabble, and other Attendants.

Scene—FLANDERS.

Time—The close of the Fourteenth Century.



PHILIP OF ARTEVELDT.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

Before PHILIP'S house, in the market-place of Gaunt.

SYMON and GUISBERT entering on opposite sides.

SYMON.

Who goes, this dead of night?

GUISBERT.

What, Symon there?

SYMON.

Guisbert! abroad like any bachelor?

GUISBERT.

Few sleep in Gaunt; this wolf of famine gnaws
At all men's hearts. Have you heard any news?

SYMON.

What, from the armies? None.

GUISBERT. \

Should they but meet,
And luck shine on the Count, our work is done.
Better than blows, hunger hath tamed these beasts;
And though, in fear of bloody Vandenbosch,
No man dares mutter peace even in his prayers,
Yet in their wan and woe-begone visages
Speak oracles.

SYMON.

They madden o'er their ills!
Mothers do slay the whimpering babes that pinch
Their dry breasts vainly, sons their sires, and eat
Of their dear flesh; yea, in the market-place
Sit munching horrid fragments, and none blame!
Spectres and grisly portents are as rife
I' th' sun at noonday as by churchyard moons;
Yea, some report that ancient chief of theirs,
Renowned Jacob—

GUISBERT.

Hush! who goes there?

SYMON.

None, none!—

Lies it not easy on thy conscience yet?
What if our daggers pinked the first hole in him?
All Gaunt assisted, tore him limb from limb
Into such fragments that his grave was like
A shambles' sweepings.

GUISBERT.

Most ungrateful beasts!
That 'tis to serve the people! Ten long years,

With sovereign and most gentle hand, he ruled
Throughout the land of Flanders; forced the Count
To live an unsought exile; mated with kings;
Yea, England's warlike wife thought it no shame
To hold his son at font, and baptized him
With her thrice-glorious name;—and then upon
Suspensions scarcely good to hang a dog
They slaughtered him! Now Heaven be praised indeed,
His son's of no such metal!

SYMON.

Marry, now
You make me laugh! A bookworm and a scholar,
A man of doltish gibes and sudden mirth,
Stirred by a straw, and yet with tears as rash
And ready on the lids as home-spoiled girls.
Tut, fear him not; he loves to sleep o' nights;
To angle in still streams; to hold the wool
To feed his fair wife's distaff; or to sit
By nights and gape at stars; or list some crone
Hum drowsily the old world's ballad lies.

GUISBERT.

And yet it likes me not, that eye of his—
Like to the window of a house on fire
I have seen it blaze when chance I crossed his path.
If I have any voice, when the Count comes,
In the great mow of death he shall not 'scape.

SYMON.

Have you found any mean to yield that letter
From the young Count to Philip's scornful wife?

• GUISBERT.

What will not gold? 'Tis strange he loves her still
The better for her hate.

SYMON.

She loved him once.

GUISBERT.

Tut, never; but when Vandenbosch, enraged
At my young Lord's dishonest wooing, struck him
In face of day, and was a prisoner,
His life in jeopardy, by tears and prayers
And feigned love perchance, she saved him—then
Married this Philip—who goes there in steel?

SYMON.

And sets the watch? The Count's most perjured knight,
Sir Raoul, who when the city gave permission
Unto his Highness' paramour, Lenor,
To gather her revenues here in Gaunt,
Commanded her large retinue, and since
In Gaunt stays with her, sharing her revolt.

GUISBERT.

I know the man; but yesterday the guilds,
Out of their love for her, conferred the keys
Of the main gate and castle on him; troth,
He might be useful, could we win him back,
And of a yellow discontented mood
I have marked him lately. Think you there is love
Between them?

SYMON.

Love!—why it is strange that one
So formed for love and splendour, that who sees her

Needs think of both, stays here in famished Gaunt,
And from the Count's large love and luxury,
With coarse-bred rustics and mechanic slaves,
Endures what sufferings hunger, toil, and fear,
Inflict on their born bondslaves, and make wince,
Yet with a smile that mocks at fate's worst spite,
And gives her delicate nurture Spartan praise.

— GUISBERT.

The Count would give broad lands to have her back,
True, for her beauty only, but much more
For the old prophecy, that WHOM SHE LOVES
SHALL SOVEREIGN BE IN FLANDERS.

SYMON.

So, Sir Raoul
Would be the fated man, aha, forsooth,
Albeit the maiden lilies will flush red
That wreathe her marriage garland. Hush, 'tis she!

GUISBERT.

Who?

SYMON.

Hist, Lenor!—See you, at Philip's house?

[LENOR crosses the stage.

GUISBERT.

So late abroad!

SYMON.

Why not?—The rabble love her.

GUISBERT.

The bookworm's wife and she are right good friends.
Would I were Philip!

SYMON.

Shame, you married man!
And yet, indeed, blest beyond rapture's dream—
But I am married too, and must not prate.

GUISBERT.

Let us break up our conference. Heaven knows,
If any note us gossip in the dark,
Vandenbosch hath his gibbet always strung.
We'll meet at noon. Farewell.

SYMON.

Good friend, good night.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*In PHILIP'S house. An ancient Flemish chamber, hung
with tapestry and arms.*

LENOR and YOLANDE.

YOLANDE.

Nay, if you weep, I must perforce weep too.
It was a childish and an ignorant fault
Long expiated. Wherefore shouldst thou weep?

LENOR.

The sting of grief is even its uselessness:
Were these tears blood, I would weep my heart away

To wash my name as clear as thine; yet tears
Poured freely as the ocean cannot do it!—
My luckless life cost her who gave it life;
My father sold me to the Count's base lusts,
Deceived by lying prophecies, and now
What have I in the heavens or earth to hope?

YOLANDE.

What then to fear?

LENOR.

Ay, true, ay, true!—where is he?
I mean Van Arteveldt?

YOLANDE.

Musing o'er his books.

LENOR.

O, learned idiocy, philosophy!
What gain men but bleared eyes o'er all their tomes?

YOLANDE.

Yet I have heard old wives, with turned-up eyes,
And sagest sighs, protest that thou wert taught
In the forbidden art, and with strange lore,
Which the Church loves not, made men worship thee,
And come no more to prayers.

LENOR.

Good sooth, the Count
Went morn and eve to mass, and I right glad
To be rid of his state-company. 'Tis true,
My nature would not keep the common road,
For passionate, wayward, sad, or strangely merry,
Still it hath been; blame that which made it so;

Of fire-kneaded clay! Ever I despised
The tedious toils of women, drowsy distaff,
Incessant needle, talkative converse
By winter firesides—my soul was dry
With thirst of knowledge. Oh, I knew not then
That wider knowledge is but wider woe,
And vaster faculty of suffering!

YOLANDE.

If ignorance is happy, I should be so,
Yet I am not.

LENOR.

He loves you—and not happy!—
Why, thou art blest beyond the dream of joy!—
And you love him?

YOLANDE.

But love him! Bankrupt word!
That mocks its sense with feebleness! But love him!

LENOR.

Then if you love him, you would have him great?

YOLANDE.

He is too great already, far, for me,
For I am vassal-born and lowly bred,
A humble violet of the hedge, and not
Like thee, a queenly rose.

LENOR.

Thou plaintive thing!
The oak descends not that doth wed the vine,
But lifts her in his arms as high as he.

YOLANDE.

And yet he loves me not as he was wont,
Else wherefore should he look so cold on me,
Be sharp and churlish, lie in wait for offence,
Frown when I smile, and when my tears will gush,
Rate me for weeping, as for some wrong deed?

LENOR (*aside*).

Alas! alas! I am a hateful thing!
Perchance some mischief-lover whispers him
How the Count's son, Sir Phœbus, prates of you,
And vows such vengeance for this match of yours
As might affright the devil's hair erect?

YOLANDE.

Then wherefore do you make me vex his ear
With large unmeasured praises of this knight?

LENOR.

How oft to tell you!—I would save this land,
Myself, you, all! Perchance achieve a death
Which, like a glorious sunset to a day
Cloudy and dark, shall clear men's memories
Of my life's ill renown. Were Philip roused,
There is a man, albeit men know it not,
To prop a falling world, or pull one down
Fixed by Omnipotence! And what a brow
Were thine, Van Arteveldt, for the kingly hoop
Upon whose height majestic the cares
Of the earth's proudest antique monarchies
Might rest as lightly as the feathery snow
On huge Olympus!

YOLANDE.

I would see him great,
But happy rather, and men say those words
Travel not oft abreast.

LENOR.

Happiness!

'Tis but tradition of lost Paradise—
There's no such thing on earth. Had we some spark
To kindle him, what glories of the past
But in his light shall suffer an eclipse!

YOLANDE.

Yet at the worst, we have a friend at court.
This wild knight loves me still. Look what he writes
After my long discourtesies. (*Shows a letter.*)

LENOR (*reading*).

Sir Knight,
Performance must fall short of words so large.
Wild offers and still wilder threats run here,
Like light and lightning mingled. Come with me;
If our cold flint yields out no fire to this,
There's none within, no manhood and no pith.
And shrink you, fearful lamb? What should you fear?
You are a freeman's daughter, I am but
A noble's, yet I know not what fear means.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

PHILIP'S chamber. *Books and instruments of astrology scattered about.*

PHILIP (*solus*).

No more: I'll read, not think: why should I pause?—

What is't to me these people starve and wail,

That weak relentings tug about my heart?

They slew my father! What is tyranny

To me, that while its most immediate slaves

Laugh in the sun, my blood churns at the sound?

Exampled thus, let no man strive to do

Good to his kind. Barrabas! still they shout.

And to be great!—The body of a sound!

What were it

Now to be Cæsar, or, like time elapsed,

Cæsar's reverse, to free what he enslaved,

Even all mankind?—All summed, is but we live,

And are to die—motes on a moment's beam—

Then wherefore should men strive for this or that,

To enjoy it but an hour? Perchance not so;

Possession of't is but enjoyment's picture,

And when we think how short the longest life,

And how our riches, power, wealth, and fame,

Crumble to dust beneath the touch of death,

Well may fools laugh to see the wise man's wrinkles,

And cowards flee at honour's aching wounds.

Then let us live for life and nothing more.

Hence, dry-brained studious dreams, and mock another

With fiery sands that distantly gleam waves.

I'll wake, and taste real joys,—and on the word

Rises their most alluring form, or is it,
Is it Lenor?—Pernicious loveliness!

Enter LENOR and YOLANDE.

LENOR.

Tread softly, Yolande; we shall break some dream.
Is it of glory, triumph, fame, and power,
Which in your mind are unsubstantial as
The ærial palaces and lakes of gold
Shaped in the visionary sunset's hues,
Which in fantastic chaos melt away?

PHILIP.

The Lady of Ardenues abroad so early,
Ere the lark's wakened by her chirping nest?

LENOR.

The bustling business of the world henceforth
Is to be women's; men shall spin and churn,
And dandle babes at home! Count Plœbus comes
With fortune on his sword, while you sit here
Questioning the ignorant stars for oracles,
Which in her sons' desertion Gaunt reads best.

PHILIP.

Nay, lady, it is not fate's certainty,
But its uncertainty that puzzles us,
And misdirects our aims. Our perplexed sense
Fights full as oft with shadows as with things,
And in the twilight of our human fears
Monsters a reed!—And if Gaunt falls, are we

Limbs of its shattered carcass, which must needs
Die with its death?

LENOR.

But if a gallant ship
Be whelmed in the ocean's billowy rage,
Deem'st thou its mountainous jaws but swallow up
The shrieking mariner, and spare the merchant
That harmlessly sails in her?

PHILIP.

Well, he dies,
And so can I: let them rot root and branch,
'Tis sharing parricide to wish them better.

LENOR.

Nay, all men guess why you sit smiling, when
Our hair sticks upright, like a field of spears,
To know this gory ravager comes on us.
Sir Phœbus loves your wife still! for her sake
Will spare her kith and kin, no doubt—perchance
Their wealth—for gold can gild dishonour too!

PHILIP.

Hath war no blanks then in his lottery?
Tut, tut, the green boy hath forgotten her;
He is betrothed to Burgundy's sole child;
What should he think of her?

LENOR.

Read what he says!
First love, my Lord, is love for ever, or
It never was.

PHILIP.

What shouldst thou know of love,
That never loved, Lenor?

LENOR.

That never loved!
But you are right, you are right, and would you were!
I pray you, dear my Lord, stand not amazed;
These are disjointed words, the sense is whole.

PHILIP.

By Heaven, this stirs me to a kind of wrath!
Thinks he so meanly of thy husband, Yolande?
Sir Knight, we yet may thank this courtesy.

LENOR.

Hate without act, like a starved hound devours
His keeper.

PHILIP.

What wouldst thou have me do, Lenor!
Dig worms i' th' trenches?

LENOR.

No! But be
What nature meant thee—these men's chief and guide.

PHILIP.

They have branded me and mine; it cannot be.

LENOR.

I say that they shall sue thee on their knees
To be their master.

PHILIP.

Pray thee, lady, laugh,
Or thou art mad. 'Tis full as semblable
The sun shall at my bidding rise and set
As this shall be.

LENOR.

But if it were!—what then?

PHILIP.

Impossibilities are daily facts:
But if—who sits within the doorway there?
A shadow, for the moon shines through it yet—
Jesu, have mercy!—what art thou?

LENOR.

What sees he?

Philip!—Oh, wherefore do you strain those orbs
As if to crack the sense of sight? My Lord,
What see you?—Nay, indeed there's nothing there
But the pale streak of dawn.

PHILIP.

Nay, this is dark!

Like to my father, hacked and bleeding o'er,
Such as these famished wolves of Gaunt did leave him
When all their rage was done! Lo, you there,
He points with mournful meaning o'er his stabs
And gory ashes!—Father!—see he turns
His ashy face against the rising light,
Shakes his head warningly, and wanes away.

LENOR.

This is some acting of the troubled brain,
Some show distract of lawless phantasy.

PHILIP.

I'll learn what trick it is!—There's nought but air,
Yet if I look and see ye palpably,
So gazed I on this thing!—I will go forth—
Go angle—but for this rod of mine—and yet—
Ye should all starve—mine eyes are mad—not I—
So fare ye well—I'll forth—what bells are these?

[*Distant bells of churches heard.*]

LENOR.

Ring they not backwards?

YOLANDE.

Philip, stay with us,

It is the tocsin.

LENOR.

Hark, 'tis the tramp of feet,
Hurried and thickening! Raoul, thy news, thy news?

Enter SIR RAOUL.

RAOUL.

A battle is fought—and all is lost—that's all.

PHILIP.

I will go fish.

YOLANDE.

My Lord, my dearest Lord!

PHILIP.

Is Vandenbosch returned?

RAOUL.

No.

YOLANDE.

My father!

RAOUL.

Lady,

He is safe, and fled to Liege.

LENOR.

Who are slain of note?

RAOUL.

John de Lanoy is burned in a church,
Arnould le Clerc is fled with Vandenbosch.

LENOR.

They need new chiefs in Gaunt.

PHILIP.

Get me my rod,
Without there! Get me my rod; I will go fish.

[*Erit.*

YOLANDE.

O, dearest Philip, do not leave us thus!

[*Erit.*

LENOR.

D'Harzelle, go muster all my vassalage,
Such of our friends whose hearts are of good stuff.
If there be new chiefs chosen, they shall owe
Some thanks to us—why look you on the ground?

RAOUL.

I am a traitor, a condemned man,

Here at your will—but where is my reward,
Wherewith you tempted me to fall?

LENOR.

Reward!—

What wouldst thou have? Art thou not great in Gaunt,
Master of my revenues, state and power?
What wouldst thou have? Thou'rt silent—be so still;
And if I partly guess thy meaning, know,
I am not angry with thee, for I swear
If I wed any, it shall be with thee.

RAOUL.

My fairest mistress!—

LENOR.

Nay, light not the sun,
Thy love is known!—Couldst not bear added honour?
Mind you the prophecy!—Get my rogues armed;
I know the common sort will flock to me
When 'tis proclaimed I need them. Haste, good knight.
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

*Market-place in Gaunt. A mob; great confusion; the
tocsin sounds at intervals throughout the scene.*

FRANS ACKERMAN and SYMON.

FRANS.

Peace, peace, good citizens; 'tis false, by Heaven, 'tis
false!

SYMON.

'Tis true, by Heaven, 'tis true! I saw one that was there. Will ye hear me, sirs?

CITIZEN.

Hear Symon, worthy Master Symon.

SYMON.

Sirs, ye were miserably betrayed; for while this bloody field was fought, Vandenbosch looked on with six thousand men, and never lent a hand.

RAOUL.

Liar!—there was a league of marsh between.

MOB.

Blood, blood! we will have his blood.

Enter PHILIP, followed by Pages, with baskets, rods, &c.

PHILIP.

An he be of my mind, and six thousand men at his heels, he will not let you. Ho, mistress, what are the news?

CITIZEN.

Lanoy is killed, and we have lost nine thousand men.

PHILIP.

What—out of six!

We let our glories at short leases here.

Lyson by poison, Pruniaux by the axe,

Lanoy is burned, and Arnould—where is he?

Bring on the basket, boy.

Enter GUISBERT.

GUISBERT.

Good morrow, Lord Van Arteveldt!

PHILIP.

I am Jacob's son, a deprived man! But I shall exchange courtesies with you, come the day.

CITIZEN.

Would that we had thy father back again!

SYMON.

His ghost were a better man than he, in sooth.

PHILIP.

And say you so?

SYMON.

What mutter you there, master scholar?

PHILIP.

An old saw, and a pious, concerning the sword; let him who lives by it, look to it; but for my father's ghost, good sirs, they say it hath been seen in the market-place a-laughing at your empty stalls.

CITIZEN.

O worthy Guisbert, good Sir Guisbert, what cheer?

GUISBERT.

Ay, now, 'tis worthy Guisbert, valiant Guisbert! What was it yesterday? Thief, renegade, betrayer! I am glad that letting blood has brought ye to your senses.

SYMON.

We have nothing for it, my masters, but to yield us instantly, on any terms, or none. The fierce bastard has beheaded seven hundred in Ypres, for holding out but an hour.

PHILIP.

The bastard!—marches he on ye?

FRANS.

Yea, sir.

CITIZEN.

Good speed his march!

PHILIP.

'Tis death to say so.

CITIZEN.

Kill me then.

PHILIP.

Bring on the basket, boy; how dar'st thou lag?

[*Exit, followed by Pages.*]

GUISBERT.

Surrender—surrender!

Enter VANDENBOSCH, with some men-at-arms, their arms covered with dust, and in disorder.

VANDENBOSCH.

Surrender!—palsied be the tongue that said so!
Who is't that talks of yielding? Forth, thou slave,
That times unborn may know what name to curse
At prayers!—What, silent all? Oh, coward beasts!

GUISBERT.

Vandenbosch here!

SYMON.

Where is your army, swaggerer? Have you left it
in the marshes?

VANDENBOSCH.

Oh, is it you, sweet sirs?

SYMON.

Tear him to pieces!

[Uproar.]

VANDENBOSCH.

Why, how now, my masters? I have sent Arnould to
Liege, with all my men, a-begging bread for you, sword
in hand; and the good citizens, despite their Lord's stern
orders, are sending you home a thousand cart-loads of
wheat, under their guard.

FRANS.

Vandenbosch for ever!

[Shouts.]

GUISBERT.

What messenger comes yonder? 'Tis a soldier,
Sea-drenched in gore and sweat! I'll learn his news.

[Exit.]

VANDENBOSCH.

From Arnould!—Go, Frans, and bring him to the
Stadt-house.

[Exit FRANS.]

SYMON.

And choke him there, if his news suit not.

VANDENBOSCH.

Nay, that were a trick of thine.

Re-enter FRANS and GUISBERT.

FRANS.

He is dead.

VANDENBOSCH.

His news!—I asked not of his health. Ha, rogue, they are ill for Gaunt, since thou dost smile.

GUISBERT.

When worse 'tis doomsday! Arnould le Clerc is slain; the corn all captured; half our men put to the sword, the rest hanged.

VANDENBOSCH.

It is not possible! What! famished men lose a battle fought for bread!

SYMON.

You see, sirs, who betrays ye!

GUISBERT.

Death to the traitor!

Bread and the Count! Who shouts his battle-cry?

Off with these Whitehoods! Flanders for the lion!

MOB.

Bread and the Count!

SYMON.

Down with the traitor then! His head for ours!

[Great uproar. Trumpets are heard without—a confused advance of the mob on VANDENBOSCH and his men at arms.]

VANDENBOSCH (*striking one down*).

Good friend, you may thank yourself for your broken crown. Draw your shafts to the head, boys, and if they make us not a clear way, snow among them.

[*Tumult—the trumpets sound nearer.*]

Enter LENOR, SIR RAOUL, with men-at-arms, and a mob shouting.

GUISBERT.

And, sirs, to tempt the Count, let's yield Lenor,
For whom he hates us more than our misdeeds.

LENOR.

Answer them, sirs, that 'tis impossible
While any of the innumerable forms of death,
In fire, water, air, can rescue me.
Courage, brave Vandenbosch! Why, let us say
These chiefs are slain—whom choose we in their room?

VANDENBOSCH.

Faith, noble lass, you speak it cheerily!
We'll have a dozen, chosen out by lot.

LENOR.

No, Vandenbosch, it is this anarchy,
This split and many times divided rule,
These hundred-headed contraries of power,
Which tug against each other, not the foe,
Which ruins us ;—choose one, and one alone!

RAOUL.

My poor deservings are not of a sort
To climb so high—

VANDENBOSCH.

Tut, no man thinks of thee,
Nor woman either. Lady, mean you me?
For, by my life, I know no fitter man.

LENOR.

We must have one in whom no man can see
His father's deathsman ; one whose fire-new name
Sounds fresh and hopeful!

VANDENBOSCH.

I have lopped some heads
From traitors' shoulders—where's the fault, e'en so?
But name thou one ; names are but sounds ; we'll hear.

LENOR.

O cruel, O stone-hearted men of Gaunt!
If the remorse of men comes chiefly with
The offence's chastisement, O wherefore now
Kneel ye not in the dust, and stretch to Heaven
Your gory hands for pardon, hands all red
With Jacob's blood, who raised your glory's flow
Unto so high a mark, that though, since then,
Ye have but ebb'd, ye are not yet at sands!

VANDENBOSCH.

Jacob is gone—feeds worms.

LENOR.

He left a son,
Your daughter's husband!

VANDENBOSCH.

So he did indeed,—
His mother was a very honest wife;
Yet he'll but laugh at us.

LENOR.

Wer't but the name,
It hath a hopeful sound! Speak, men of Gaunt,
Shall Philip be your chief?

VANDENBOSCH.

By all the saints,
He shall be King in Gaunt; I'll seek him out;
Yonder he comes; come, sirs, for Philip, shout!

[*Exit.*

FRANS and MOB.

Philip Van Artevelde! Philip for our chief!

Enter YOLANDE.

YOLANDE.

Lenor!

LENOR.

Hush, hush, all's well!—Ne'er pale; he comes;

GUISBERT.

Symon, we have no business here, if Philip
Is to be master; pray you let us hence.

[*Exeunt* SYMON and GUISBERT.]

Enter PHILIP and VANDENBOSCH.

FRANS *and* MOB.

Save us, Lord Philip!

PHILIP.

Save yourselves, good men,
And owe no salvage. Do I wield the thunder
To save you like a god?

VANDENBOSCH.

Marry, sirs,
He will not yield to be the greatest man
In Gaunt and Flanders.

PHILIP.

Nay, to be
The king-wolf in a lean and famished pack.

LENOR.

So be it then, so be't! Let Gaunt be dust,
Her charters gone; thy father's murtherers
Her tyrannous masters; let the gaudy knights
Come home and woo your wives before your eyes,
Ye gnaw your hearts in silence! Be it so,
Lenor shall find a sanctuary in death.

PHILIP.

Ye say, sirs, that the love ye bore my father
Moves ye to set me in his place. Ah, sirs,
He shed his blood like water for your state,
Toiled till his eyes were hollow, and the hair
Gray on his manhood's temples, long ere age
Frosts o'er the curls of fat, unthinking men,

And then ye slew him! Must I too toil on
For such a gory hire?

VANDENBOSCH.

That which is done
Cannot be undone; you shall have his life,
But not his death.

PHILIP.

Swear, then, ye men of Gaunt,
If I do take your desperate fortunes' reins,
I shall be sovereign dictator, master,
My word the law of Gaunt, until this war
End or we!

VANDENBOSCH *and* MOB.

We swear, Van Arteveldt! one and all.

PHILIP.

Ay, with your lips,
But I will ring the metal of your hearts;
I will not lure you to your good, but drive,
Even as the storm-fiend at its wildest lashes,
With whips of lightning, the rebellious sea!
First, I must have my lictors.

LENOR.

Raoul d'Harzelle,
And my three hundred axemen, let it be.

PHILIP.

Raoul, thou art now the captain of my guard.
This shalt thou do; let none in Gaunt assemble
Without my orders; all ambassadors,

Newsmen and prisoners, bring them straight to me.
On pain of death, let no man lift his hand
In private brawl; so much quells anarchy;
And now for justice: take my tablets, Raoul,
And the twelve murtherers of my father named,
Seize and behead in public.

RAOUL.

But . . . my Lord!
Guisbert and Symon are to Bruges fled.

PHILIP.

We'll wait for them.

FRANS.

Ambassadors from the Count are at the gates,
Old Lord Laval and a Sir Knight unknown.

PHILIP.

Admit them, Raoul. [Exit RAOUL.
I do behold a whiteness on your cheeks;
Shame, muster roses lest these full-fed serfs
Should laugh at us.

VANDENBOSCH.

Let us proclaim our chief;
God save the sovereign city's Regent, Philip!
[Trumpets, shouts.

*Enter LAVAL; PHŒBUS, with his visor down; RAOUL
attending.*

PHŒBUS.

Why, what new madness stages itself here!
Hath hunger turned your senses all adrift?

PHILIP.

Madness no more, on which your faction thrive;
Henceforth the hundred thousand hearts of Gaunt
Beat in this bosom—one.

LAVAL.

We come to speak
Unto the starving, much-abused commons;
But I am sorry, sir, to see you bit
By the insatiate madness of the times.
It was but yesterday the Count commended
Your prudent abstinence from rebel-power,
And named you as a man whom he might raise.

PHILIP.

To a tall gibbet, ha!

PHŒBUS.

Your latest hopes
Sunk in the blood-laid dust at Berchem towers,
And carcass-black Nevele; yet, yield your keys,
Lay your walls in the dust, and wait his will;
The Count may yet be merciful, to some.

LAVAL.

This is the extreme verge of clemency,
The which o'erpassed—woe, woe to all!

PHILIP.

I am the sovereign city's chosen lieutenant,
And I reply—Sooner than so submit,
Perish man, woman, yeanling babe, and child,
And Gaunt itself be fodder for a fire
Which shall lap Heaven!

[*Murmurs.*]

FRANS.

Alack, they starve.

PHILIP.

Their woes indeed would move the insensate rock ;
The Count is human ; I'll go plead for you ;
What shall I yield ?

FRANS *and* MOB.

All—everything.

PHILIP.

Faith, ye are hungry !

LENOR.

But these knights must stay
In pawn for you, my Lord—or, *leave your head !*

PHŒBUS (*struggling with LAVAL*).

Nay, I will speak, though thunder bade me peace.
Philip, a word.

PHILIP.

You are familiar, yet
Speak on, Sir Knight ; your pleasure with us ?

PHŒBUS.

None !

Here at your feet I throw Count Phœbus' glove,
Purporting this much : wheresoe'er ye meet,
Be it Heaven ! ye meet such enemies
That things which from creation opposite came,
Compared, shall friendly and congenial seem.

PHILIP.

Is he the god of war that men should quake
To hear his armour jingle ? Let him come.

What quarrel hath the dainty boy with me?
But I refuse it not; a pretty glove.
Sirs, you shall stay in Gaunt till I return,
And with the Lady of Ardennes I'll lodge ye;
She is enough my friend to make no question.

LENOR.

My roof shall be much honoured.

PHILIP.

Dear Lenor!

I'll overtake you.—Raoul, be their guard. Farewell.

[*Exeunt* LENOR, PHŒBUS, LAVAL,

RAOUL, and GUARD.

Well, sirs, I am for Bruges. What, yield all?
Come, my fair Yolande; I will not believe
The Heavens against thee! Courage, courage, Gaunt!
Shame on ye, and on me, for these are tears.

[*Exeunt*.

SCENE V.

LENOR's house. *A Gothic chamber, richly furnished.*

LENOR.

Ye are as welcome, sirs, as words can call you,
So we'll no more of that.

PHŒBUS.

We thank you, lady.

LENOR.

But in a muffled wise, for such a voice.

Lift up that iron mask that I may know
I speak unto a friend. Phœbus, we are both
Too old in grief, if not in years, to play
At bo-peep.

PHŒBUS.

Well, I am here!—have done your will—
And to what good?

LENOR.

Unto a mighty good,
As yet ye dream not. With that spark I have lit
A blaze shall light the earth.

LAVAL.

Look, from my Lord
I bring these priceless gems. Obdurate beauty!
What can you ask he will not give, to lure you
Back to your fortune?

LENOR.

Bid him then restore
The jewel of mine honour, without which
These do but blazon shame!

LAVAL.

Too plainly now I see
Lying report is true for once; you love
This treacherous Raoul, and on him would heap
The treasures of your prophesy.

LENOR.

Report
Lies like a fool, to lie so senselessly!
Your Lord shall have a rival, being a prince
More worthy of his greatness. Ere ye go

Ye shall behold me, to the King of Kings,
Vowed a poor votary.

LAVAL.

Now Heaven forbid !

Enter SIR RAOUL.

RAOUL.

Lady, this new-appointed Regent comes.

LENOR.

Pray ye unarm, my Lords ; lead them, Sir Raoul,
I shall be with you very instantly.

[Exeunt PHŒBUS, LAVAL, and RAOUL.]

I would not see him, and yet being to part
For ever,—my dear Lord !

Enter PHILIP.

PHILIP.

Beloved Lenor !

I come not now to thank thee, beauteous goodness !
I have a parting prayer to make you, lady ;
Let not these hostages stir out of doors
Till I return.

LENOR.

If it may be, my Lord,
Without too harsh enforcement. Fear you then
They shall escape ?

PHILIP.

They may corrupt some loose ones.
I know this knight ; but would not seem to know,
Till I can give him back his glove again
Hard in the teeth ! What doth he here ?

LENOR.

Alack!

But, my dear Lord, and had you lost your all,
As they do that make shipwreck of first love—
You dream not what it is to love in vain!

PHILIP.

Think you she is so true?

LENOR.

If with his youth,
Fame, beauty, power, he cannot tempt her to
Desert our fear and famine, why, indeed,
Then we may call her faithful—faithful, Philip,
Faithful as only dogs and women are!

PHILIP.

I think it is not written in my stars
I should be happy; farewell, dear Lenor!
Why dost thou weep?

LENOR.

Nought, nought; farewell, farewell!
Go ere my heart breaks! Philip—a moment—stay—
But 'tis no matter! Go, and wheresoe'er,
Fortune go with thee!—Farewell, once again—
But we shall meet no more.

PHILIP.

No more? Perchance.

LENOR.

Nay, thou shalt safe return, and surging crowds
Shake Heaven to welcome thee! If I am not
There with the multitude, what matters it?

PHILIP.

Where shouldst thou be not welcoming Philip home?
Have I offended thee?

LENOR.

Offended me!

That were impossible! But, ere you return,
I shall profess myself Heaven's votary.

PHILIP.

Hast thou then driven me forth into a world
Without a sun?

LENOR.

My task is over in it—

But as for thee!—without the touch of fear
Climb thou ambition's giddiest heights! 'Tis written:
Thou knowest the prophesy! Oh, dearest Philip,
Pardon, or if not pardon, pity me!
I am mad, yet by this light of Heaven I love thee
Better than all things, better far than life,
(For I had rather died than told thee so,
Yet it is told)—and it is prophesied,
Whomso I love shall Sovereign be in Flanders

PHILIP.

Lenor!

LENOR.

Nay, Philip!

What I have said, is said, and I have said it!
Go forth, proclaim a woman woo'd thy love,
Write my shame high upon the noonday sun,
And I'll not disavow it though ye stone me
For a prodigy of blushless impudence!

The rack might wring my blood, but not these words,
Which I yet speak! I love thee, Philip, love thee,
And will 'till memory be chaos! Speak,
Dost thou detest me? Never gaze at me,
But rather use thy dagger than those eyes.

PHILIP.

Lenor, Lenor; false syren! wouldst thou tempt . . .
Thou art mad, and so am I!—Too fair, too false!
Nay, I will hence; these words—they are not thine!

LENOR.

Yes, I am mad; 'tis madness to speak truth;
But even fiery-brained delirium raves
Distorted truth, and is but mad in that
It overpaints reality! Believe me crazed,
And let me have the madman's privilege
That mocks at thunder! Oh, believe it not,
That with a sensual, swart, unwomanly fire,
My lost soul burns! By these heart-pouring tears,
And this hot blush which sears my cheek, I swear
I would not wrong thy wife of one poor smile
That should be her's. I want but leave to die
Pitied by thee.

PHILIP.

By me! Would I could fly thee!
Oh thou most excellent and loved perdition!
Thou execrable essence of all bliss!
'Tis well thy mask is dropped; 'tis very well!
Thou hast traduced my Yolande's snowy faith,
And to this evil purpose; but 'tis fit
A sovereign's harlot should know nought of shame.

LENOR.

Thou deemest then—thou sayest—I am of those
Who make a market of their bodies' shame
I' th' public path? Say yes, and let me die!

PHILIP.

Nay, worse, that thus by subtle shows of good—
And dar'st thou thy dishonoured beauties match
With vestal sweets of fresh-blown innocence?

LENOR.

Dear Heaven! thy Yolande—I—thou hast chosen it!
What doth Sir Phœbus here?—Nay, I but rave!
Thy stars are lit for vulgar destinies,
And such a love as mine, whose rich excess,
Were all the icy Alps to silver turned,
Could not be bartered, thou wilt toss away,
And in exchange take offals of another!

PHILIP.

If thou canst prove the hundredth tithe of this,
Here from my breast I pluck her as I would
My heart had it betrayed me so!

LENOR.

No, no,

I do belie her.

PHILIP.

Then art thou accursed,
And only as the syrens beautiful
Whose treachery makes beauty hideous:
Nigh hadst thou tangled me in witcheries,

But now I'll have thee written up in Gaunt,
That husbands may beware of thee, and wives
Point at thee passing! Sorceress, farewell!
Live to know shame; repentance visit thee,
But never more will I!—Farewell for ever!

[*Exit.*

LENOR.

Ay go, ay go, I care not for thee now!
That look hath iced my soul! Oh earthy man!
Hadst thou almighty power to inflict
Thou couldst not add one pang to those I feel!
O shame, O woe, O anguish without name!
Philip, come back!—he is gone!—I did but jest!
Come back!—to deem me—what—ha, what?—earth!
hell!—
Phœbus, Count Phœbus! hellish prophesy!

Enter PHŒBUS, SIR RAOUL, and LORD LAVAL.

PHŒBUS.

What ails thee, lady, and what fearful cry—

LENOR.

Nothing!—Oh, nothing!—Wouldst thou have revenge?
Why so would I—O lying prophesy!
Sweet Heaven, if this be death, thrice welcome! Oh!

[*Falls.*

END OF ACT I.

ACT II.

SCENE I.

*A ravine, near Gaunt. Shrine of our Lady of Sorrows,
rudely wrought in black oak.*

Enter YOLANDE and SIR RAOUL.

RAOUL.

What, are you fearful lady?

YOLANDE.

I should be,
But that these stars seem Heaven's sentinels
That watch above, and keep clear thoughts from harm—
But said you not Lenor was hither fled?
Where is she then?—Yet, surely, Raoul, her fears
Are vain? The people love her far too well
To yield her up on any terms of peace.

RAOUL.

They have no gratitude, insensate beasts!
And serve but those who wrong them. I will seek her.

YOLANDE.

Ay do, ay do, and, prithee, say I am here,
And spare my telling, any luck to share.

Were Philip home, we all should be as safe.
And merry too, as sunny grasshoppers.

RAOUL.

Farewell!—and when I see your face again
There shall be faith in woman, figs on thorns.

[*Exit.*

YOLANDE.

Is yon the morn whose rosy lightnings stream
Over the hills?—Poor soul! who could have thought
To injure her, so good and beautiful?
Mother of sorrows, at thy shrine I kneel,
To pray thee turn these hard men's hearts, and give,
Give me my Philip home, with peace in's arms,
And to thy shrine I vow three golden lamps
To fright this leafy darkness, which frights prayer.

Enter PHŒBUS, LAVAL, and men-at-arms, with torches.

PHŒBUS.

Our Mother shall wait long enough for them,
Thou lovely perjurer!—Know you me not?

YOLANDE.

My Lord, I am a wife, a wedded wife!
Unhand me sir—I am no perjurer;
I loved Van Arteveldt ever—never thee!
I plighted thee no faith; and if it were
A sin to save my father with a smile,
Heaven is o'er all!

PHŒBUS.

A wedded wife!

We will unwed thee, or this husband shall
Husband the loathings of my basest camp!
His wife! but no more worthy to possess
A treasure of such priceless price than are
The negro's swarthy nostrils to be ringed
With pearls of shelly light.

YOLANDE.

Mercy, my lord!
Bethink thee, prince, thy faith is sworn and pledged
Unto the Lady Rosabel, with whom
Dukeships and countships wait thy widest clutch!

PHŒBUS.

Away with Rosabel,
Dukeships and countships! What are all to me?
What is the costliest banquet to one sick
At heart with death? Go to, thou fair, false thing!
I will have thee or nothing! no, not life!

YOLANDE.

Lenor! Sir Raoul! help, knight, I am betrayed!

PHŒBUS.

Thou foolish wench! he is in our complot,
Yea, and thy friend, Lenor! Sirs, bear away;
To Bruges, on! What! flutter, pretty sparrow,
I' th' vulture's claws? To horse, to horse, away!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Gaunt. A street. Dawn.

Enter LENOR, in a monk's habit, and RAOUL on the opposite side.

LENOR.

Raoul—thou chicken-heart! dost know me now?

RAOUL.

Lady—

LENOR.

But one word—done! Is't done?—done?—done?

RAOUL.

The bird is snared and caged. Lady, you smile,
But in a bitter sort.

LENOR.

Would it not make
The white and clenched jaws of Death himself
Relax into a smile? To hear thee say
We are damned—two everlasting souls—are damned
Below the centre, with as calm a look
As one that market's eggs! And yet 'tis done!
Treachery's masterpiece, the blackest, worst,
Which hath been since the kiss of Judas.—Rogue,
And dost thou laugh at me?

RAOUL.

I laugh to think
How Philip—will not.

LENOR.

True—he will not laugh . . .
Nor deem me now so all-unparagoned !

RAOUL.

And, faith, if one good turn deserves another,
Lord Phœbus must needs stand our friend at court.
But, lady, from your deep-sworn gratitude
I look for such reward on earth as shall
Comfort the eternal one below.

LENOR.

Thou'rt right—
Thou shalt be recompensed ; but win thy wage
Ere thou demand it ; finish me the work,
Bring the whole piece, and then—

RAOUL.

And then?—

LENOR.

And then !

What didst thou say ? Methought I heard a shriek
That sounded up to Heaven, and broke the choir
Of the gold-harping angels. Didst thou hear ?

RAOUL.

But hungry children wailing in the streets,
Or some one dying, like a wounded bird,
Untended and alone.

LENOR.

Would I were born
To any misery but shame like this !

Yea, in this harsh and most unchristian world
The beggar's portion held of gibe and scorn
And bitter crust of unloved poverty!
Would I could weep!—Thou most remorseless wretch!
Hast thou no tears?

RAOUL.

Like women's—at my will,
Which wills not now! Hush! here stalks Vandenbosch.

LENOR.

I had rather that the trump of doom should rend
Mine ears than that most wretched father's voice!
Whither, Oh whither? Would this were the brink
Of all things known, I'd overstep it thus.

[*Exit.*

RAOUL.

Fair soul!—but storms do rock themselves asleep.
Comes Philip too!—I must stir Symon up.

[*Exit.*

Enter PHILIP and VANDENBOSCH.

VANDENBOSCH.

What cheer, what cheer, good son?

PHILIP.

Faith, cold enough.

Where is my wife, good father? She was wont
To meet me at the gates.

VANDENBOSCH.

Within, no doubt—

But what's the news?

PHILIP.

She is not, Vandenbosch ;
Her maidens tell me that, at crack of light,
She went to matins.—Troth, I bring no peace,
Unless they will yield all. Ha, good Sir Raoul,
Hast seen my wife ?

Enter SIR RAOUL.

RAOUL.

Your wife, my lord—

PHILIP.

My wife!—

Why dost thou start ?

RAOUL.

My dearest lord—

PHILIP.

Thine eye is herald of some dismal news—
Speak, sir, what irks you ?

RAOUL.

My good Lord, at dawn
She past my gate—and, as I thought, to meet
Your home-returning steps.

PHILIP.

Indeed!—Where are
These hostages of mine ? They may be loosed.

RAOUL.

In truth, my lord, I am glad to see you home,
For, on some sudden fear, they both are fled.

PHILIP.

What say'st thou?—fled!

RAOUL.

But ill-seeds have they left :
Symon and Guisbert are returned, and stir
The rich men to a resolute stand against us.

PHILIP.

We'll find a way with them.

VANDENBOSCH.

I see thou art
Of other metal than opinion coined thee.
He must be feared who with the commonalty
Hopes to be great ; value men's lives no more
Than larks in season,—blows, blows, are reason!

PHILIP.

'Tis strange! Let some one seek her, Raoul, and say
I am returned.

RAOUL.

We could not overtake them,
Rode we the invisible coursers of the wind!
They are beyond pursuit's most gory spur!

PHILIP.

Pursuit!—and they! Speak out, man—what dost mean!

RAOUL.

I fear, my Lord, I fear—

PHILIP.

What dost thou fear?

RAOUL.

Lord Regent! Philip! O my noble Lord!

PHILIP.

If thy news come from hell, he is here to listen!
Reality hath bounds, the mind has none;
Speak, mumbling idiot! Nay, sir, pardon me.

RAOUL.

Your wife and Phœbus—Phœbus and your wife—
My Lord, be calm!

PHILIP.

Why, I am very calm,
Man, I am hearing only; speak the worst,
And then 'tis done.

RAOUL.

Fearing, my noble chief,
For the sweet lady's safety (as indeed
These conquered times of Gaunt give fullest scope)
I kept her in my sight, and 'neath the walls,
I saw them meet.

PHILIP.

Meet, meet! who met? how now!

RAOUL.

With such a hurried, rapturous, wild joy,
As long parted love—such glowing kisses!
Such fevered transport! But I was alone,

What could I do? He led her to his steed,
And so they fled to Bruges.

PHILIP.

Fled! my wife!
Thou slanderous slave! Yolande, my wife!—my wife!
Villain, thou liest!

RAOUL.

Would I could say “yes”
With as clear memory as I answer “no.”

VANDENBOSCH.

Oh, my dishonoured age!—it cannot be!
The foul fiend follow her, and such a curse
As hath not been since Cain was branded black!
A father’s curse upon her! Hear me, Heaven!
And let these white hairs never rest in earth
Till I have laughed to see my curse fulfilled!

PHILIP.

My thoughts are slipping on despair’s abyss
And clutch at air. Art thou assured—my wife!

RAOUL.

I speak the truth, my Lord.

PHILIP.

There is no truth
In anything; all seems, and nothing is!
Will no man wake me from this hideous dream?
Give me but breath—but one slight gasp of air!

E

Some one unclasp my gorge; I owe you, sir,
A better turn;—give me a little time
To know myself.—Pierre, is it you?

VANDENBOSCH.

O, son!

RAOUL.

Remind you, my good Lord; this news, alas!
Seasons you but to worse calamity!
Said I not—but my griefs trip up each other—
Symon and Guisbert, treating of surrender,
Pelt my men—rather yours—from the market-place?

PHILIP.

Ha, do they so?—By heaven, I'll teach them manners!
Come with me, sirs!—Dear saints, I will avenge me,
So that the world shall ring for many an age,
And wronged men quote me for a proverb till
The earth, grown old, shall fail in memory.

VANDENBOSCH.

What will you do, my son?

PHILIP.

No matter, Pierre,
But keep your dagger loose!

[*Exeunt VANDENBOSCH and PHILIP.*]

RAOUL (*following*).

And I'll keep mine,
Though but to sheathe it—in my grandmother's cat!

SCENE III.

The market-place. Steps of PHILIP's house occupied by SYMON, GUISBERT, the MAYOR, and other rich men. The White Hoods thinly scattered. The cathedral of Gaunt in the distance, whence the Miserere is heard, faintly chaunted.

SYMON.

Chief men of Gaunt, and deacons of the trades !
Thus have you heard our clement lord's last terms,
The which refused, with forty thousand spears,
He marches on our weak, unguarded walls :
Ten thousand of our choicest soldiers slain,
Our chiefs all dead, a bloody anarchy
Wasting our lives and wealth as free as water,
(And what gained we, to change the Count's sole rule,
For mad complexity of tyranny ?)
The German granaries all closed against us,
No hoped relief, coop'd in with famine, torn
By broils intestine, what can we but yield ?

MAYOR.

Must we yield up our charters, rights, and dues,
And be the beasts of burden to the great ?

GUISBERT.

Methinks that speech would better fit the mouth
Of some poor brawler of the populace,
Than goldsmith Scheldt, our rich and honored Mayor !
Why, I see none among you, Citizens,
Of the mad rabble rout who follow Philip.
All men of substance, solemn men ye are,

And masters of the trades, the springs of wealth,
Whose streams withheld, all occupations starve !
Why should we always crouch and fawn upon
The rascal vulgar, whose coarse sinews strain
Daily at our command ? and dread the serf,
Massed with his fellows, whom we spurn alone ?
For shame ! we lack but courage to be strong !
Let us be resolute, and make our peace
With or without them !

MAYOR.

They are very strong.
We will not put our lives in jeopardy
On your unauthorized pledge.

GUISBERT.

Unauthorized !
Here is a letter from the Count, and sealed
With his great seal, your worship's handiwork.

MAYOR.

I am for peace—and ever was.

SYMON.

And I !
Then let us seize these traitors to the Count.

Enter a Messenger, who speaks to GUISBERT.

GUISBERT.

Symon, the cry is—Pierre and Philip come !

SYMON.

Well, are we beaten curs, that crouch to hear

The master's step? For shame, look up again,
And shew these insolent jacks-in-office, how
Their reign is o'er, and cut-throat tyranny!

MAYOR.

You set us, sir, on desperate courses, yea,
Being desperate yourselves on former scores.

GUISBERT.

I have heard that age and sorrow craze men, either,
But both together are too much for you!

MAYOR.

I thank you, sir. I had three fair sons once.

Enter LENOR, still disguised, followed by RAOUL.

RAOUL.

Sweet lady!

LENOR.

Tut, tut, I am not mad, but calm
As green turf in a churchyard; let's be merry
And see men bustle—we have nought to do.

Enter PHILIP and VANDENBOSCH.

PHILIP.

Ho, you are early at your councils, sirs!
What sudden news is this that courtesy
Gave to necessity the step, and left us—
The leaders of the council—out of it?

GUISBERT.

We speak for the general good of Gaunt, and all.

PHILIP.

Beseech you, sirs, speak on, 'tis profitable ;
Rome was erst saved by cackling of her geese :
Oh, ye unjust lightnings !
Why shatter ye the bulk
Of the gnarled ancient oak, while heads like these
Pass by unscathed !

SYMON.

Ye are but mad to think your reign is gone !
We are free citizens—you dare not harm us.

PHILIP.

They say that dying men can prophesy ;
Art thou a prophet, and not at thy prayers ?

SYMON.

Citizens !
There is our Lord's most generous full pardon,
On sole condition, that we render up
Two hundred tyrants—such as these !

PHILIP.

No more ?

All of you, from sixteen to sixty aged ;
(Saving your monks,) stripped to the shirt and bare
At foot and head, with halters round your necks,
Shall forthwith from the city march and meet
This clement Count some three leagues in the plains,
And in the dust lie down, and howl for mercy.

SYMON.

Yea, but two hundred only shall be punished.

PHILIP.

Two hundred only!—a fair composition!
Art thou, or Guisbert Grutt among these few?
Villain! how dar'dst thou, in thy darkest dreams,
Plot such a rank conspiracy as this?
Sooner the hundred thousand that we are
Bite dust together! Insubordinate slave!
Better for thee it were to break upon
The famished lion's moaning sleep, than cross
Philip's none-sparing rouse!

SYMON.

Rescue, good friends!
Sirs, set upon them! Who will merit pardon?
[*Cries and tumult.*
Where is thy power now?—I fear thee not,
But spit upon thy threats, thou barking dog!
Thy father died a worthier death than thou,
Whom rope and hangman wait!

PHILIP.

Ha, say'st thou so?
Thou hellish murderer! 'twas thy fell hand
Which laid him low, and this which pays thee back
Strikes but too late! To hell and get thy fee!
[*Stabs him.*

SYMON.

Oh, merey!—Oh, my heart! [*Falls.*

VANDENBOSCH.

Thou follow him, his co-mate in all ill! [*Stabs Guisbert.*

So perish all who would betray the cause
Of liberty and Gaunt !

GUISBERT.

My wretched children !
Thrice damned ambition ! I do leave my curse
On thee and thy pale slaves for ever ! [*Falls. Uproar.*]

PHILIP.

Let no man be afraid ; the dead are dead ;
Their lives were justly forfeit to the State
Which they have long betrayed, and to my laws.
And now let any man in freedom speak
Upon these late conditions.

MAYOR.

We are all ready,
Please it your highness, or to live or die,
As you command.

PHILIP.

You shall do worse than die,
Old Moneybags ; your thin and watery blood
We lack not, but your gold to buy red streams.
'Merce him a thousand marks, and all of them.

MAYOR.

We have done nought, my Lord.

PHILIP.

When ye have nought ;
I say, ye are rich ; that is offence enough.
Take hence this broken clay—but they are calm !—
Is't good or evil I have done to thee,

Thou fleshy statue, carved by the sculptor, Death,
To puff out thus Prometheus' luckless theft?—
Well, sirs, again, what think ye of this peace?

MAYOR.

Alas! we have no choice.

PHILIP.

No choice—no choice!
What, are these nobles, men, or gods? If gods,
Where is their thunder? And if men, O men!
Are ye not men too, hungry, desperate men!
Have ye not nerves and sinews like to them,
And flesh unpampered by vile luxury?
Ye who have lost your all, shall Death affright ye,
When fortune's favourite sons laugh in his teeth?
For shame, ye famished rogues! and do ye dare
To die by heart-consuming famine, yet
Fear the hot, hasty, glorious blow of battle?

MAYOR.

What can we do? Our hearts are sick with famine.

PHILIP.

Then welcome home still watchful tyranny,
The insolent noble's spurn, the rich man's gibe,
The hood-winked justice peeping through her band,
The tyrannous tax, that eats your wealth away!—
Oh, fearing Death, look here upon these dead!—
Feel they the pangs of love betrayed or scorned,
The ravelling beak of sorrow, hate's dull gnaw,
Hope baffled, age's aches, youth's maddening blood,
Fear, hunger, thirst, cold, heat, toil, death, for these,
These are all life—death reckons of none of them!

MAYOR.

What choices have we, Philip, but to die?

PHILIP.

Ye have heard the first, and two there are remain :
Surrender all ; your charters, lives, and wealth ;
Or secondly, retire to your churches,
Confess yourselves, and meekly die of hunger ;
Or thirdly—but 'tis vain.

VANDENBOSCH.

Speak on, speak first!

PHILIP.

Oh, that my voice were thunder! I would speak
Words which should shake the earth, words which should be
Undying as the Heavens! But ye are deaf,
And I'll be dumb.

VANDENBOSCH.

Say what you will, for one
I'll do your bidding, or die on't.

Cries—And I, and I.

PHILIP.

Die then with me, or live
To such a victory as oldest time
Cannot remember, such a blaze of fame
As shall outdazzle all the Roman did,
Or Grecian dreamed. To arms, to arms, and march
On Bruges ; beard the lion in his den!

Remember ye how ever in the field
We made these silvery knights of Flanders skip,
And failed but when in hungry walls pent up
We skulked from battle!—Who will go with me?

Shouts—All, all!

PHILIP.

Since it is so, go home and get your arms;
We'll be a-foot; deacons of the trades,
From house to house proceed, and cull me out
Five thousand of the strongest; 'tis enough
To share the glory or to die the death!

VANDENBOSCH.

Only five thousand, Philip!

PHILIP.

'Tis as many
Can crawl in armour now!—Good brother men,
It was not numbers won the day at Cressy,
What time the lion English and their king,
Forespent with hungry marches, cold, and toil,
Like hounds at fault, lay panting on the field,
Till crossed by their accustomed prey the French!
And what fell then?—The poorest Englishman
Shouts as he answers,—Ha, we conquered them.

*[Exeunt omnes, except LENOR and
RAOUL, who come forward.]*

LENOR.

Raoul!—

RAOUL.

All men are mad, but he is madder than all!—

LENOR.

Go, marshal forth my train
Under my father's banner; let them arm
For deadliest battle, as in his fierce day!
Why dost thou pause?

RAOUL.

You have scarce spoken it.

What is to be done?

LENOR.

Why, that which must be, man!
Is this a place for men in love with feasts,
As thou art?—Come, we will to Bruges, sir,
I'll plead your pardon, or you shall not need it.
Ne'er gape, but follow me.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Bruges. The palace of the Count. A grand hall richly decorated. The COUNT, PHŒBUS, Nobles, and other attendants, at a banquet. A Fool.

PHŒBUS.

Yea, dear my Lord, thus barbarously murdered
Symon and Guisbert yielded them to death,
What part they took in sequence we not heard,
But fled upon the spur.

COUNT.

Had you been safe,
Artevelde had never seen his Gaunt again :
That name !—it likes me not : omens are in it
That make old wives to prophesy.—Laval !—
Why comes he not ?

PHŒBUS.

My Lord, he comes ; I'll meet him.

Enter LAVAL. PHŒBUS advances with him to the front.

PHŒBUS.

The night is dark enough—hast skulked her in ?

LAVAL.

Yea, Sir, and stowed her, still insensible,
Within my castle-keep : here are the keys ;
You are her gaoler now.

PHŒBUS.

Oh, but how long
Tarry the hours that lag to my revenge !
I think my father means to sleep no more,
He delves so deeply in this night !

COUNT.

Laval !

Yield they not even my moon-struck ward, Lenor ?

LAVAL.

Rather their city, sire ; I saw her there,
And dreams, my Lord, nor maddening minstrels' strains,
Ne'er shaped so fair a mortal !—Love keeps state
Imperial on her white, swan-heaving breast !

Better than laughter, Venus, tears become her,
And shew like diamonds on her peachy cheeks!—
She is better worth a ten years' siege than Helen,
Or a world lost than gorgeous Cleopatra!

COUNT.

By Heaven! I will not spare a dog of Gaunt.
And now this distant-sapping siege of famine
Wearies me more than it confounds our foes,
And everywhere the noblemen and knights
Blush to see well-born men so basely foiled:
We'll march to-morrow on them, lords, what say you?

PHŒBUS.

Sir, as you will.

COUNT.

Why, son, your cheer is faint!—
We'll feast the morning in; sound, minstrels, sound;
A health, a health, fill to the golden brim,
He is no friend to Flanders whose cup blinks!—
I drink to as brave a knight and fair a man
As ever man hath feared, or woman loved,
Albeit I say it—to my son, Count Phœbus!

LAVAL.

Phœbus, the Count, your Lordship's heir, despite
Of all the threats of surly Burgundy!

COUNT.

I would this cup held all the blood of Gaunt,
And I would drain it thus!

[Trumpets—they drink.]

Enter an ABBOT.

ABBOT.

May it please your highness, do you walk at dawn
In the procession of the Holy Cross?

COUNT.

Certes, good father, and with pomp unwont,
For forty thousand spears shall follow you,
And half that they bring back from Gaunt, your church
Shall share with my foundation at Malines.

FOOL.

Blows and all, uncle?

ABBOT.

This day we'll fast to your grace's good success.

FOOL.

Then shall your fast be a mermaid!

COUNT.

A mermaid, fool?

FOOL.

Yea, uncle, half fish, half woman.

Enter a KNIGHT, hastily.

KNIGHT.

My liege, amazing news! D'Harzelle sends word
The Gaunt men are a-foot to give you battle!

COUNT.

Let's see thy face:—art drunk or mad to say so?

Enter second KNIGHT.

KNIGHT.

My Lord, the Gaunt men, some six thousand strong
Marching all night to Bruges—

COUNT.

Come they not
With ropes around their necks? Go, good Laval,
And learn. [*Exit LAVAL.*] Why this is strange!

Re-enter LAVAL.

Well sir, the news?

LAVAL.

My Lord, the Gaunt men come in hostile wise!
They are 'camped between the marshes, fenced around
With spear-spiked staves. Three very valiant squires
Rode to the front and showed your grace's banner,
And thereupon the cross-bows rattled round,
And laid one bleeding on his horse's neck.

COUNT.

They are distract with grief, hunger, and fear,—
Yet is there valor in their madness, lords!

PHŒBUS.

Who leads the rascals? Philip Van Artevelde?—but
That is superfluous asking.

COUNT.

Ha, my boy,
And pales your cheek to say so?

PHŒBUS.

'Tis the morn,
And not my cheek looks pale.—Van Arteveldt!

COUNT.

Only six thousand! We are many reapers
To such scant harvest; let my trumpets sound,
Let all men arm; sir knights, to horse, to horse;
Six thousand men! We are forty thousand strong;
They starved, we full of wine and lusty cheer.

LAVAL.

If my advice might be, my sovereign Lord,
I say, that since they cannot 'scape us now,
Let's wait until to-morrow watching them,
Whereby we shall have light to root them out,
And they be weaker having nought to eat.

PHŒBUS.

Oh, greybeard counsel, Lord Laval, and dull!
Why Heaven preserve us, men of gentle blood,
What shall the knights of England and of France
Say, when they learn that forty thousand soldiers
Stood trembling watchers of a half-starved mob?
Shame on our knighthood!—See the rabble press
Fiercely a-foot to win the fight before us!
Hark how they shout! Mount, mount, and to the charge!
By Heaven, these vulgar knaves shall not outstrip me,
Or Burgundy that brands my birth a bastard's,
Lies not as false as hell! Stay here who will.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.

Camp of the Gaunt men. PHILIP'S tent.

PHILIP.

Why, 'tis a desperate cast ; but it is thrown :
We die—what then ? We are not seen at meals,
Our chairs are vacant by the winter fire,
And where is he, good man ?—aye, where ?—In shew,
Rotting asleep, blankly oblivious ;
And what in deed ?—from the unfathomed depth,
Is it truth answers, or our echoed fears ?
For mine own part, I were content to be
A bodiless and airy contemplation,
Resting from all things, wrapt in infinite peace !
But be it thus, or thus, whate'er it be,
Will be and must be borne ; and speculation
Brings us but nearer in the way of Time,
Who shakes the hour-glass in his palsied hand,
While Death stands by at watch. I'll think no more.

Enter VANDENBOSCH.

VANDENBOSCH.

Good morrow, Philip ; 'tis a fine cool morn
For our hot work ; planning the battle, ha ?

PHILIP.

What cheer without ?

VANDENBOSCH.

Oh, they are all at mass and dolorous shrives,

Bequeathing this and that, and shaking hands,
Weeping and laughing in distracted show,
Or gaping, like a shoal of stranded oysters,
Around some wailing monk.

PHILIP.

I'll cheer them up.

VANDENBOSCH.

Look cheerfuller, then. Open the tent there, boys.

Tent opens. A wide marshy country. Bruges in the distance. The Gaunt men in battle-array.

PHILIP.

Good morrow, brothers, this shall be a day
Famous for ever in Gaunt's chronicles,
Or end them. Sirs, it joys me well to see
How fresh and eager, as the morning air,
Ye stand on tip-toe, looking to the foe :
Your cause is good, and loved by Heaven ; and now
Ye have advanced so far, that desperate means
Are hopeful only, and if ye would fly
Back to your famished wives, children, and sires,
Ye cannot, for the horseman's fiery hoof
Will, sooner than your stand, o'ertake your flight.

GAUNT MEN.

Battle, battle !

PHILIP.

My good friends, it is early ; break your fasts,
Divide what poor provisions we have left,
Like brothers, and when that is gone, your swords

Must win ye more, or, what shall do instead,
Of that and all things else.

Enter a MESSENGER.

MESSENGER.

My Lord, they come,
Full forty thousand strong!

PHILIP.

Slaughter, rejoice!

Wait not their charge when once they cross the marsh!
See, how disordered by mad haste they come,
The horsemen trampling down the foot to win
The van of death! Victory, victory!
Let no man fear who battles on this day
For his soul's weal!—
When freemen battle, Heaven opes all its gates
Wide as the light of dawn, to let the souls
Of those blest martyrs enter, crowding up,
Red with their glorious gashes, all unquestioned!—
Ha, friends, we'll turn the marsh, the sun of Heaven
Shall fight for us, and, with his blinding light,
Put out their eyes! Gaunt, Gaunt, who follows me!

VANDENBOSCH.

Charge, boys, and get before old Pierre who can!

[Exeunt.]

*Alarum. Scene changes to another part of the field. The
Count, attended by Knights. Enter LAVAL.*

LAVAL.

My Lord, blest news and golden firstlings for me!—

The Lady of Ardennes hath come to Bruges—
Is safe within the walls—with all her men!

COUNT.

Our fortune treats us like crammed turkeys now,
And chokes with too much good! Go, bring her here,
Sweet fruit to this red feast. Skip, good Laval!

[*Exit LAVAL.*

It vexeth me to see how still they march!—
How few!—

We'll oversweep them like a storm-urged sea:
Saint-Lois! what seems it there?

Re-enter LAVAL.

LAVAL.

My Lord, my Lord!—

COUNT.

Look yonder, sir!

LAVAL.

My Lord, the sun

Glares whitely in mine eyes; it cannot be!—

COUNT.

Fury and death!—look there; our men-at-arms
Open their ranks; throw down their spears and fly!

LAVAL.

My Lord, Lenor!—

COUNT.

Speak, madman, idiot!

LAVAL.

Entering the gates, a feigned fugitive
Has seized on one, and holds it 'gainst our strength,
Raising the rabble to assault our backs.

COUNT.

Ha, my son charges!—

LAVAL.

Let us save the town!—

COUNT.

Treason, fy, treason! we will stop her pranks—
Gather some body—follow me, good knights.

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter PHILIP and GAUNT MEN.

PHILIP.

I have sought him everywhere, but death and he
Keep company to day, and will not meet me :
On, on, clench teeth and slay!—to Bruges, on!
And he who spares one shrieking enemy,
Let his name
Stand next to Judas in the calendars
Of world-detested men!

Enter RAOUL.

RAOUL.

My Lord, my Lord!—

Lenor, gone mad, has entered Bruges, and—

PHILIP.

Thou art mad to say so!—On, to Bruges, on!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE VI.

Market-place in Bruges; in front is the Count's palace, with a tower and gateway. Tocsin ringing. Parties of fugitives cross the stage. KNIGHTS, the FOOL, &c.

Enter a CRIER.

CRIER.

Oyes! Oyes! under pain of death, all men repair with arms to the Count's palace.

FOOL.

Out of the frying-pan into the fire. Not I, an I were as wise of the maddest of ye. Can ye run, said I to my legs?

[*Exit.*]

Enter the COUNT, LAVAL, KNIGHTS, *and others bearing torches.*

LAVAL.

My Lord, return! the Gaunt men force the gate;
And a mad rabble do possess the town.

COUNT.

Where is my son?

LAVAL.

Fled with the knights, no doubt.

COUNT.

Thou liest, slave! Come, sirs, we'll rescue him!

Shouts behind.—Gaunt, and Lenor!

Enter Fugitives.

COUNT.

Stand, ye base hinds, or meet the thing ye fear!

[*Strikes some.*]

LAVAL.

Oh dear my Lord, look thither where they come!
Save your great life, and nothing's lost but time.

COUNT.

I see there is no remedy at present;
Put out your torches; whither shall I flee?

[*Exeunt.*]

Enter PHÆBUS.

PHÆBUS.

I feel no wound, yet am I drenched in gore;
My limbs grow stiff. But I will die more deaths
Than lives rose up this morn, ere he shall win her
Back to his hated arms! I'll fire my keep
And burn this Helen in it! Oh, for life
But to do this—then, death, e'en as you will.

[*Exit.*]

Women cross the stage shrieking. Enter PHILIP, VANDENBOSCH, and SOLDIERS.

PHILIP.

You see their skins are not of diamond
To turn the sword's keen edge! Look how my steel
Bleeds to the hilt! Ho, sirs, this is not well,
Cease from your plunder! What, ye mutinous dogs,
Must there be rascal blood upon it too!

VANDENBOSCH.

Where is the Count?

PHILIP.

Escaped, I fear. How now
What blaze is yonder? Is the town on fire?

VANDENBOSCH.

The tower! the tower! hark, 'tis a woman's shriek.

PHILIP.

A woman's voice!—Ah, see!—look at the bars.
Lend me a mace, this is too horrible!

[*Exit.*

Enter LENOR, RAOUL, and VASSALS; she is still in monk's weeds.

LENOR.

Where is Van Arteveldt?

VANDENBOSCH.

Look, he bursts the gate—
Rushes within!—now all is lost!—the flames

Burst out in torrents! Saints! he is there, there, there!
And now he sinks!—no, no, he re-appears!

Re-enter PHILIP, bearing YOLANDE.

PHILIP.

Whoe'er she be, she is safe; your torches, sirs;—
What, is she dead? Light, light! Oh, heavenly hosts!
It is your daughter, Pierre!

VANDENBOSCH.

Accursed thing!

Why have you saved her?

PHILIP.

Even for what you will!

Away, thou bright demoniac! who art thou,
Monk, whose wild daring makes this madness fact?
What, art thou wounded? Rest on me, wronged truth!
I know thee, matchless faith! thou art—Lenor!

[LENOR *falls into* PHILIP's arms.]

END OF ACT II.

ACT III.

SCENE I.

Arras. Court of Charles VI.

PHŒBUS and LAVAL.

PHŒBUS.

Oudenarde alone holds out against him, and now famine clinches them, they must needs surrender; yet surly Burgundy still holds back the power of France!

LAVAL.

It likes him not, my Lord, to resign so rich a heritage to please his daughter's liking: note you what an attentive ear he lends to Philip's heralds in their attaint of you concerning Yolande.

PHŒBUS.

By'r lady, and the matter wears its fairest side out!—'Tis well, she is mad; very well, indeed! Yet it something troubles me. Poor wretch!—But she was fair.

LAVAL.

Raoul dreads her babblings no less than we, and plots her death; and he hath a good head for villanies.

PHŒBUS.

Aye; he is a rogue of the sort which the devil tempts

not ; they fall of their own baseness. But what can this strange assembly of the states at Gaunt portend ?

LAVAL.

'Tis but conjecture with the nearest ; Arteveldt's intents are hidden and prodigious. The rabble would have him king ; and to that, Lenor showers gold as if she were Danaë's heiress ; but madness may throw dice on the upshot.

PHŒBUS.

Pray, Heaven, he have not some inklings of our plottings with the nobles !

LAVAL.

But, my good Lord, let us within ; the court gives us but frosty sunshine at best ; and our tarriance will put us in shade.

PHŒBUS.

Yea, we must duck observance now ; crouch to powerful slaves ! Oh, Laval, a begging king is even the basest of beggars ! We are cracked coins that even chandlers shake the head at.

LAVAL.

If our promise-makers hold touch, we may snap our fingers anon at Burgundy ! Vandebosch and Arteveldt pull ill together ; and Raoul promises to set them by the ears. Yonder is the court !

PHŒBUS.

Come, let us put on the complexion of the time, and look like joy.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

Gaunt ; the market-place. Banners, tapestry, and garlands hanging from the windows ; bells ringing joyfully. Music. A procession of the trades, under their banners.

FRANS and RAOUL D'HARZELLE.

RAOUL.

Humph!—the glassmen, the weavers, the fishermen, the armourers, the jerkin-makers ! Will it never end ?

FRANS.

'Tis a fine sight for one who loves not shows.
Each tower and point of sight, even the steeples,
Hang black with men like bats ; age, crippled sickness,
Childhood, and youth, crowd all the public way.
Men yell, babes clap their tiny hands, and women
Weep all aloud for joy !

RAOUL.

Can one see hence ?

FRANS.

Yonder he comes, amid the billowy crowds !
Upon a snow-white courser, bit with gold,
Glittering in armour like the unhelmed Mars !

RAOUL.

Ho, there too comes the Lady of Ardennes !

FRANS.

Side by his side, upon a champing steed,

Which like a thing of air scarce hoofs the ground!
It is as if the huntress Dian lent
Her arch-necked barb to Venus.

RAOUL.

Go to, go to!

Talk fustian to tailors! Is he asleep?

[Shouts behind.]

Hark, how the frogs croak welcome to their stork!—
No smile, no bend, no “Sirs, I thank ye,” but
Stern as a statue! They grow silent too.
Philip, it is not hard to wean men’s hearts,
Whate’er it be to win them!—Still as death,
Or stormy sea hushed by some magic spell.

FRANS.

They will alight and come this way.

RAOUL.

Ay, they!—

‘For it fell about the cuckoo time,
Of all times in the year!’

Enter MOB, running.

FRANS.

To our cue! Ho, sirs, what’s this? Shout, shout!

RAOUL.

Put your gratitude in your lungs, and shout for Count
Philip, King Philip, Emperor Philip, God Philip!

1st CITIZEN.

Not I: he buffeted one in the face for kissing his robe!

FRANS.

Hist, here is the world's challenge for beauty!

Trumpets. Enter LENOR, attended.

2nd CITIZEN.

Save you, beauteous lady!

LENOR.

Save you, sir!—

But keep your shouts for him who hath deserved
As far beyond all recompense as hope!

[Exit.

1st CITIZEN.

Marked ye, how she smiled at me like a sunny rose?

2nd CITIZEN.

Nay, 'twas on me, most witchingly!

1st CITIZEN.

On thee, scum!—that art the cause why scullions'
noses are cocked!

2nd CITIZEN.

I would a better man had told me so!

1st CITIZEN.

To thy worse, he could not.

2nd CITIZEN.

Nay, I wear that shall teach you manners.

[They draw daggers.

RAOUL.

Pinch your one's tail, Frans; we'll have sport.

The citizens fight ; general commotion. Martial music behind. Enter PHILIP, attended.

PHILIP.

Peace, rogues! what's this?

1st CITIZEN.

Rogues! by my halidame, I am an honest man.

PHILIP.

Honest! let's see thy face? Art honest, friend?
Though it be daylight, let us have a torch
To scan this miracle! A man and honest?
What ails thine honesty? Art thou in arms
Against the world?

RAOUL.

My Lord, these fellows quarrelled about no honesty;
but—a woman.

PHILIP.

Let them fight on!
I'll stand and see fair play; to it, good rogues!
Kill, hack, steal, plunder, lie, betray,
All for a woman—for aught good ne'er stir.
He who falls leaves one fool the less behind.
Will ye not fight? Go, cage them till they kiss.

1st CITIZEN.

Lord Regent, is it thus you have made us free!

PHILIP.

Free men, and not free wolves, I have made ye, sirs;
I'll teach ye how to read me: get ye gone!

Keep on your filthy caps ; faugh, it offends me
To see your greasy pates !—I am a man,
Therefore a woman's son, therefore a rogue ;
Do homage to your dogs, they are your betters.

1st CITIZEN.

I can wear my cap easily enough ; I have no horns.

RAOUL.

Rogue, dost thou flout my Lord ?

PHILIP.

Unhand him, Raoul !—

RAOUL.

He does belie your grace !

PHILIP.

But prove it false to say—I had a wife—
And I'll build temples to thee !—Make me way ;
What, sirs, the antlered deer will braise a path !

FRANS.

Shout, Shout !

MOB.

Save you, King Philip !

PHILIP.

Whip me these rogues that call
Philip a traitor !—Come, sirs, let us hence.

[*Exeunt* PHILIP, FRANS, MOB, and *Retinue*,
except the two Citizens.

RAOUL.

Ye see, sirs how he takes your loves; yet he is no better gentleman than the Count, to my thought! You, sirs, what think you?—Are you dogs, rats, water-newts?—Ask your friends how they like it.

[Exeunt Citizens.]

Nobles like not his justice, citizens his pride, kings his usurped sway, mobs his mastery! You shall be revenged! Shall I smile to see a goat browse my honeysuckles: I'll sow hemlock between them! You shall be revenged! Yet, if Vandebosch come not, they will crown him, in spite of his own teeth as well as ours; and, lo, in the very nick!

Enter VANDENBOSCH.

VANDENBOSCH.

Good day, Raoul; where is this king of ours?

RAOUL.

Sir, in Heaven's name, I did beseech you not to stir from Bruges without a sufficient guard!

VANDENBOSCH.

Tut, I fear not his faith.

RAOUL.

Oh, he is much changed, worthy captain!—But, welcome home!

VANDENBOSCH.

Home!—well, no matter; I have the cockle's, the coat I crawl in.

RAOUL.

Without guard!—But unless you snatch her violently from their hands, I fear she must be burned!

VANDENBOSCH.

Burned!—

RAOUL.

Your daughter burned; it is the law of Gaunt, and how else can he wed this king-making trull of his, this Helen of the mob, Lenor?

VANDENBOSCH.

Do you believe the tale then?

RAOUL.

No, not I; innocence only is so bold as they are; to toy before observers, call by fond diminutives, heap on her all that the liberal commons have conferred: but, you will say, they were good friends ere Yolande was betrayed!—And so they were.

VANDENBOSCH.

Ha, so, what dost thou mean?—

RAOUL.

Impy thoughts will cross cloudy fancies;—but she babbles strangely! What is so wicked as man, so subtle as woman?—No marvel we see rivals be rid of!

VANDENBOSCH.

Why, then, thou believest thine own report; that—that saw her fly with Phœbus?

RAOUL.

Mine eyes are not good at distances ; but this gossip should be dark ; let us within !—Good soldier though he be, there was a better—fell in the Capitol !

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Chamber in the Count's palace. LENOR, FRANS, and certain DEPUTIES.

FRANS.

If your grace bids us do it, we will do it ;
You must needs know our lord the Regent's will.

LENOR.

Who would not be a king, brave Frans?—and thus
Shall ye his perquisitions stop which probe
How it befalls your purses are so fat,
The state's so lean.—Oh, some of you there are
Gripe hard the peasants!—but when he is sun
You shall all be his rays, his glory's peers.

FRANS.

Lady, my faith no other guerdon asks
Than first to knee your sovereign beauty crowned !

LENOR.

Rise, rise, my faithful Frans ; if he be king
You shall be seneschal ; and all of you
Shall bound your own rewards ; pray ye awhile
Leave me free air ; let some one send d'Harzelle.

FRANS.

Madam, I will not fail.

[*Exeunt FRANS and DEPUTIES.*]

LENOR.

What is it that in ecstasy's rapt height
Gnaws at my heart?—Fear is it, or remorse,
The laggard angel that still comes too late?—
Yet, were't to do again, I needs must do it!—
Loves he me as I would be loved?—Aye, there,
That touch'd the aching quick!—

Ha, Raoul, thou'rt late!—

Enter RAOUL.

How runs the stream?

RAOUL.

As if your will were bias;
They are mad to have a king, and swill the wines
That from your fountains flow, and toss their caps,
And swear you are the better king o'th' two!

LENOR.

Would I were even a happy country wench,
Singing amid the green and yellow fields
At sunset, when they milk the munching kine!

RAOUL.

Ha, ha, it makes me laugh!—with chopped red hands
Squeezing coarse dugs?—but thus our great ones prate,
That ne'er sweat in the sun.

LENOR.

Would he were crowned !
Till then I cannot rest ; and for that word,
I have nigh forgot its meaning !—This must turn him,
Or in what gulfs must we plunge with him, Raoul !

RAOUL.

Refuse a crown—offered by beauty's self !
Oh, *if* he loves you, 'tis impossible !

LENOR.

If ; wherefore *if* !—Yet “ *if* ” it, an you will.
Aye, love is but the sweetness of a rose,
That palls the sense even with its own excess !

RAOUL.

Of late, indeed, I note a kind of coldness
Creep o'er your loves, such as in married folks,
Gradual as twilight—

LENOR.

Slave, 'tis false ! 'tis false !—
He is not cold ; thou dost belie him rogue !—
These heavy toils of state make him seem harsh—
He is not cold, dear Raoul ! or where am I ?—
On all sides desperate.

RAOUL.

Then 'twas but my thought :—
Sooner than children, men of playthings tire ;
Keep dog, keep bone ; it is a good old saw ;
But, not to waste the daylight, what will be,
Will be—good saints assist us !—

LENOR.

Call below,
Above they plot against us !—Hast thou seen her ?
How fares she now ?

RAOUL.

Mad, mad, mad as ever ; [knows,
Saying—that daisies and cowslips grow for aught she
I'th' moon—and so they may, for aught I know.

LENOR.

What should I fear ?—who lists to idiocy ?—
How is she mad ?

RAOUL.

Like a woman—unreasonably !—
Women go mostly mad on airy matters ;
A vapour, or a shadow ; love, religion,
Or a spoilt cooking !—Had she not been mad
She had kept her senses ;—faith, she needed them.
Heaven grant she do not make us mad in turn !

LENOR.

What dost thou mean, good Raoul ?

RAOUL.

Her's is a sort
Of darkness, I have heard physicians say,
Which by some sudden recollection struck
Will often blaze up day ; and even now
In lightnings, memory will cross her mind :
So that, albeit the most part she will sit
Like the fair chiselling of a marble saint,

Lifeless and cold, at times tears flood her eyes,
And then she talks of wrongs, and prays Heaven's pardon
On all false friends!—I marvel what she means.

LENOR.

These eyes have surely lost the use of tears,
Or burst with them!—Oh, on a theatre
Where human woes are played, my heart would break
To see this acted—and yet I have done't!

RAOUL.

Half-way's too far to turn the head and whine;
He who dares take the first step from sheer right
Should dare to take the last or none at all,
For, 'tis a steep which, entered on, each step
Doth force his sequent, and, still hurrying on,
Breaks the waverer's neck!—If she live on,
Farewell love, peace, and sovereign dreams, farewell,
For we must live the aspens of report.

LENOR.

The devil that puts knives in murderers' ways,
Ropes before suicides,—set thee in mine!—
Oh, wouldst thou have me do the deed alone,
Of all the evil works of men, that's damned
Below redemption, murder?—

RAOUL.

Tut, the law
Slays her, not you; law's murders are not called so.
Smile but her ruin; the Regent will permit
This long-recorded sentence. If he loves you,
What's a broiled rival?

LENOR.

Thou most ruthless wretch !
Thou pitiless and undissembling fiend !—
What shall I call thee ?

RAOUL.

Oh, an honest fool,
That loved a weathercock, I mean, a woman,
And would have made her queen of all the winds,
And so fell from a steeple.—E'en as you will !—
I'll pack for France.

LENOR.

Why, I must do
That which I must, for 'tis in vain to chafe
Against the tide and press of destiny !

RAOUL.

And in good time, he comes ;—with a French knight !

Enter PHILIP, with a KNIGHT.

PHILIP.

My Lord of Burgundy asks proof ?—'tis well,
Sir, you shall have it ; bear him so from me.

[Exit KNIGHT.

Go, Raoul, and bring me my Ambassadors,
Those honest burghers you will find within.

RAOUL:

Ambassadors, my Lord ?—

PHILIP.

Ambassadors,
Chosen for fitness, and not heraldry.

[*Exit* RAOUL.]

To see how this Lord gapes!—Surely the gods
Made men and then forgot them, or our antics
Would move them in their wrath to singe us up;
We reasoning mites in Dutch cheese earth; in thought
That hold the Heavens in our scope; in act
Trivial as summer flies!—
Looking on what we might be, what we are
Such sluices of warm tears I could pour forth
Should make earth ocean!—What, my fair Lenor!

LENOR.

There was a time I had not stood so long
Glassed in your eyes, unnoted.

PHILIP.

Ay, there is
A time for all things, eating, drinking, sleeping,
Life, death, whence follows it some crafts make cradles,
And some carve death's heads grinning on our tombs;
And women love variety, Lenor.

LENOR.

My Lord!—

PHILIP.

Well, well, what is it thou wouldst say?

LENOR.

Pardon, my Lord.—

PHILIP.

And tears!—Still tears, tears, tears!—
Nothing but tears; must I have tears and blood
Ever around me?

LENOR.

Pardon, dear my Lord;
It is my nature's waywardness that ever,
When I was gladdest, tears perforce would spring
Into my lids—I recked not why.

PHILIP.

Go, go;
Weep on, weep on; if women's tears were water
The sun ere now were quenched; I say, weep on!—
Why, if we yielded all to thought, what were
These bright blue-bending skies but charnel vaults,
And the bepainted earth one sepulchre!—
What! dost thou grudge my love its happiness?

LENOR.

No, though it steep me to the lips in shame!—
Let sorrow, scorn, disease, and ruin take
Thy form, Van Artevelde, and I'll worship them!—
Oh, on this broad and faithful heart reposing,
Commissioned lightnings find me; I'll not shrink.

PHILIP.

Let guilt quake when the Heavens arm, not thou!—
Whom hast thou wronged? what husband hast betrayed
What loving, kind, and trusting heart made hard
With treachery, so that no more—no more—
Throughout the unfixed eternity of time—
Never again shall peace—. Be innocent,

And let the howling tempests o'er thee rage,
And the white wildering lightnings do their worst !

LENOR.

Oh, why should men use steel when words will slay ?

PHILIP.

Still tears ?—And yet thou too—thou wilt betray me !

LENOR.

Few are so false as to betray themselves,
And what have I which thou art not ?—Oh, Philip !
Commingle with thy glories, my dimmed name,
Even as a dark cloud in a sunny sky
Dissolves to fleecy light, grows bright again !—
Dost love me, love ?—Nay, I can better bear
Thy harshest frown, than that extorted smile !

PHILIP.

It is not so ; I love thee ; rest content.

LENOR.

Not in the coining breath that flatters us,
But in men's deeds, let's look for oracles ;—
Love unsanctified
Feeds soon to ashes ; and that passion's earthy,
Dull, and unspiritual that gluts its greed
In satisfaction of base appetite !—
If my rash yielding makes my faith a doubt,
Remember what respects had I to plead,
Nice scruple, or feigned customary pause,
That had lost all but love,—and loved too well !

PHILIP.

Why, thou art love's own miser, thou sweet scold,
And putt'st to heavy usury!

LENOR.

Say, you love me
As all men love fair women, which they call me ;—
I would that thou shouldst love me better far,
I scarce know how ; by some blest human tie,—
By one includes them all !—My dearest Lord,
Pluck out the railer's tongue, the scandalous blot
Which grimes our state . . . make me thy wife, thy wife !

PHILIP.

My wife !—Dost thou forget ?

LENOR.

She is condemned !

PHILIP.

By him who sentenced us :—Shall we then brand
So fiercely the offence we do ourselves,
And over-arch with roses in the sun ?

LENOR.

Not for myself—but—if thy soul's deep yearn
Be crowned with young succession ; Oh, my Philip !
I would not have thy children curse thy name,
And rate their mother's memory on her grave !

PHILIP.

Rest, rest, I will content you ; think not, sweet,
I am that slave of custom who would deem

No justice due unto thy love, for that—
Nay, dearest, I'll not say it. Oh, that men
Should be the things, yet boggle at the words!

Enter RAOUL, *with the* AMBASSADORS.

RAOUL.

My Lord!—my lords Ambassadors are here.

PHILIP.

Sirs, it is written largely in your notes
What service I expect from your despatch,
But briefly summed, 'tis thus: I have picked ye out,
Men of unvalued and unnoted names,
And for a purpose. Heed not how coldly kings,
Great lords, and high-born dames shall look on you,
With what lip-curling and unwelcome stare,
Puffed councillors survey you! Not to them,
But to their sweatiest, most despised serfs,
Ye are ambassadors: send me not news
Of festivals and poms, but miseries;
Not how kings feast, but how the commons starve.
Note me what sallow discontents appear,
Not on the noble's, but the peasant's brow;
Dive me in mines, listen at cottage doors,
At dungeon bars; hear what the vulgar voice
Mutters o'er evening cans; lank visages
Of artizans, report me, chiefly those
Who work in steel. When, as is like, your entries
Stir up the mud of cities, mark who stare
With lean pale children in their arms, and smile
Dismally on your poms; these are the signs
Of cankerous aches in nations.

LENOR.

Unto what purpose,
Dear my Lord, should this be?

PHILIP.

Oh, to make
Blacksmiths let cool the iron with thought, and reapers
Gaze at their sickles; miners leave their earths
And blacken sunshine; weavers quit the loom,
And poor men curse aloud, and women smile
To see their children starve. Where's the offence?—
Speed, sirs, farewell.

AMBASSADORS.

Our service be our thanks.

[*Exeunt* AMBASSADORS.]

RAOUL.

My most dread Lord! if asking's no offence,
Where go these embassies?—

PHILIP.

Where they are sent.—
Are you a newsmonger?—If so, good Raoul,
My thoughts are not the market of observers
That trade in news.—We all have purposes,
And mean to do no doubt, but the great gods
Are over all!—Read me my riddle, ha?

RAOUL.

The nut's too hard, my Lord; but—may it please you!
The deputies are all met in their hall.

PHILIP.

It does not please me; go, and say, I come.

RAOUL.

I'll to my cue ; for I must seem against you,
Or they will nose a rat.

[*Exit* RAOUL.]

PHILIP.

Seem !—Sir, you are ;
I like it not.

LENOR.

What like you not, my Lord ?

PHILIP.

These honest seemings ;—he betrays them, true,
Then why not me ?

LENOR.

My Lord ?—

PHILIP.

A trusty rogue,
That overlooks their cards, and winks at me :—
What didst thou say ?

LENOR.

Nothing, my Lord !—and yet
What means this strange resort of ragged men
Who troop to you, so that our stateless court
Looks like a congregation of mad beggars,
And we ourselves a king and queen of scarecrows ?

PHILIP.

Scoff not at rags ; they are my livery ;
Had ever Tartar Cham so large a train ?—

I must now trust in rags, or to my grave
And grope if truth be there!—I'll make me plain
Ere roost-time, my Lenor, so question not.

LENOR.

Trust not in mobs!—mobs slew your father, Philip!—
The faith of women, which you men deride
(But, oh, the balance!) the wild ocean's smile
Sparkling in infinite breezy restlessness;
Perfidious April; suns, and showers, and winds,
Whatever of most changeable and false
Poets have railed at in their bitter rhymes,
Are fixed as everlasting Alps compared
With the mad multitude's inconstancies.

PHILIP.

What wouldst thou have me do, then?

LENOR.

Live a king,

Or die one!—

PHILIP.

Ay, the name glitters—gaudy sex!

LENOR.

Thou must be all or nothing, raised so high
That envy dares not dog thee with her eyes,
Or yield up all that in them precious seems:
Seize on the gorgeous good which Fate herself
Offers with wooing hand: the crown of Flanders
Floats o'er your head, but grasp it, and 'tis yours!
The commons love you, and for the jealous few

Who envy your authority, that act
Makes you too high for blame!

PHILIP.

A very woman!—

Dost thou not love me ; therefore then betray thee?—
I have carved a mighty and peculiar fate
Unto myself, whereby my name shall stand
Not next to Cæsar's, but alone!—to free
The enslaved earth, and liberate mankind!

LENOR.

'Tis a dream's dream!—To liberate mankind?
They will not let thee, Philip ; they must have
Idols to kneel to, names to shout, and words
To kill each other on,— shadowy forms
Which they can hate or love ; no matter which.

PHILIP.

If they will be ungrateful, they shall have
More cause ; I'll do them good despite their teeth.
They fool thee, my sweet queen !

LENOR.

What is to be done ?

PHILIP.

Be secret then—for I'll not trust thee—no
Nor any woman that can smile and weep
As ye can all!—Come, love, no more of this.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

Hall of the States. A throne prepared. RAOUL and DEPUTIES.

RAOUL.

You have fair warning; look to your heads!—he has discovered all; offer him the crown, the mob will have it so, but—mum, scullions, here's master! [*Enter FRANS.* Where is his highness?

FRANS.

I but herald him.

Trumpets. Enter PHILIP. All rise.

PHILIP.

Sirs, and our faithful brothers, welcome all.

RAOUL.

My Lord, though little graced, I speak for all.
Not by old precedents, but special grace,
Your Highness has been pleased to call us forth :
Sir, we would know your pleasure but to do it.

PHILIP.

'Tis true—sit, sirs!—I have not swarmed ye here
To weigh and sift my purposes, but do them ;
I am dictator and not sovereign :—
You hear, sirs, how they treat our embassies?—

RAOUL.

But very roughly, in good truth, my Lord!

PHILIP.

Kings will have none of us!—Rebellious slaves,
Peasants, and mutineers, they call us, sirs;
Against us they clutch hands, forget old hates,
Choke down heart-burnings, yield age-battled claims:
The oppressors of the earth all think as one, [stand
Then wherefore not the oppressed? Why should we
On nice respects, that stand on none with us?
We need allies!—Let kings with kings ally—
Nations with nations!—Wherefore do ye start?—
The pomp and majesty of earth shake hands,
So let the woe and ragged misery!
I have a lever poised to lift the world,
An earthquake of the minds of men to shake
Mountainous tyranny from its crushed breast!
The oppressed against the oppressors in all lands
We will array us, and find combatants,
Outnumbering our foes as want will wealth;
Rags, robes; starvation, luxury; tears, smiles.

RAOUL.

How may this be, my Lord?

PHILIP.

We will proclaim
Throughout the world, henceforth, all men are free,
Equal as Nature sent them from her forge,
Save in such just respects as merit makes
His own and not his worm-gnawed ancestors!—
And to begin at home; we'll loose our slaves,
Enfranchise our vexed serfs, lay down additions

And old hereditary mummeries,
Yield up our tyrannous seigniories, and live
Brothers with brothers, honest men, no more !

FRANS.

Release our slaves !

RAOUL.

Renounce our names !—what will our mothers say !

FRANS.

But if France wars on us—

PHILIP.

We'll war with France !

War with all tyranny we will proclaim,
War, war, eternal war, no peace, no truce,
Merciless, mad, exterminating war !—
We will not human be again until
Humanity is free, till we have wrenched,
From stepdame custom, our defrauded part
In father Adam's heritage. Well, sirs ?—

RAOUL.

My Lord, not with such wild intents, we deemed
You had summoned us, the chief men of the land ;
These words will please but desperate beggary !

PHILIP.

What if I make ye beggars—will it then ?
Turn about is fair play.—Among ye, sirs,
Ye have divided all the joys of earth,
The pomps, the pleasures ; yea, ye grudge the poor

To scent the flowers over your garden walls.—
Why should this be?

RAOUL.

If misery were not meant,
Why should the wolf have fangs to gnaw the lamb?
These tyrants hate us most because we have none;
They would grow kindly, would you be our king!—

FRANS.

You take a greater's office!—Hist, her grace!

Soft music; scene opens. Enter LENOR, magnificently attired, followed by pages with a crown, sceptre, &c., on cushions.

LENOR.

My Lord, as their grand feudataire, the states
Have called me to this office; in their name
I offer you this wreath, and robe, and orb.

PHILIP.

Scarlet and ermine!—Never in this land
Save by crowned sovereigns, has this robe been worn!

LENOR.

And you are sovereign by a worthier plea
Than heralds blazon, by a people's choice!
Here kneel the chiefs of Flanders at your feet
To own that he whom nature made their lord
Hath his claim recognised, while ancient rules
And musty genealogies are thrown
Among the rags and fripperies of time!

PHILIP.

Oh, why should flesh be proud?—And yet we shrine
Our carrion in marble! Rise up, sirs;
Our war is with such baubles; rise, I say!
Debase not God's sole image in the dust,
Or like a king's in antique coinage, is it
Worn out of men?—Bring me a skull, a skull,
I'll crown death with this clod of beaten gold,
And image what shall be!—Stand ye agape?

Enter VANDENBOSCH.

Ha, Vandenbosch in Gaunt!

VANDENBOSCH.

What is all here?

PHILIP.

Well, my good father.

VANDENBOSCH.

And my good son, well!

Marry, what manner of a feast is this?—

What gaudy quean art thou?—Is't may-day, sirs,
Or some quaint masque?

PHILIP.

Do you forget this lady,

Or yourself?

VANDENBOSCH.

Fair madam, let me see you; no, in faith,
'Tis the Count's trull who, vexed with his old age,
Went virtuous for a season, as a flame
Lulls but to burst out wilder!—Ha, and blush!—
Why, we are all mistaken; 'tis some nun.

PHILIP.

You are quaintly merry, Vandenbosch!—

VANDENBOSCH.

Why, yes,
I'll take my mirth then to a funeral!

PHILIP.

What say you, Lady?—This is woman's work
To wrangle with the tongue.

LENOR.

My dearest Lord!—

VANDENBOSCH.

There is a devil sparkling in her eye,
Be wise and leave her; for were she in Heaven
She hath ambition to seduce the few
Who were found faithful when the archangels fell!

LENOR.

I am but what I am; now do thy worst
Thou and all earth—ay, and the Heavens too!

PHILIP.

Good Vandenbosch, what brings you here to Gaunt?
I bade you march on Warneton and Commines.

VANDENBOSCH.

I am here to attend your coronation, sir!

PHILIP.

You have forgotten Symon.

VANDENBOSCH.

And you, Guisbert!

What! dost thou think we bled ten years and sweated
But to make thee our master? Fire and death!
And who art thou to ape at sovereignty,
And lay these taxes on us? We'll not pay them!
Cassel, Bourbourg, and all the seaward towns
Speak in my voice; we say, we will not pay them.

PHILIP.

What is't ye will not pay?—

VANDENBOSCH.

The groats, the groats!—
Four groats on every hearth forsooth!—we will not.

PHILIP.

I say, ye shall, and there's an end of it.

VANDENBOSCH.

Make us!

PHILIP.

I will.

VANDENBOSCH.

Are you a king,
Or do you mean to be one?—

PHILIP.

So they say
In alehouses, and wherever else they know
Things better than the immortal gods—so, sirs,
Make me a new diadem! *[Crushes crown.]*

VANDENBOSCH.

How, Raoul!—But, yea,
He'll be the thing, not name, nibbling our charters
Like a rat i'th' chest!—Sirs, one and all, let's hence
And keep these taxes from him with our swords.

[All rise.]

PHILIP.

Softly, good Lords!—Without there!

[Enter GUARD.]

Go, and ye will,

I have brought ye hither for a feat that's done;—
All dispossessed and ineffectual men,
Return to plot against me! Noble traitors,
I know your loving chat with France i'th' dark,
And in your room have set up vulgar knaves,
Who speak no French.

LENOR.

Greater than king,
What shall I call thee?—O, thou glorious man!
It is more honourable to be thy slave
Than emperor of a herd of common men!

VANDENBOSCH.

And did these plot with France?

RAOUL.

Do one act more,
And be a god; condemn your guilty wife!

VANDENBOSCH.

Yea, murder her, my daughter, murder her,
And throne this great-souled harlot by thy side!

LENOR.

Shall I endure this longer?—No, by our love!
Either now wed me, or, though my heart wrench out
With that last word—farewell, farewell, for ever!

VANDENBOSCH.

Wilt burn her, ha?

PHILIP.

I will be just, restore
Man to his human nature; I was born
For nothing, or to set this wrong world right;
Laws of antique injustice, old decrees
Of consecrated wrong-doing, I will crush,
Or they shall me! Women, ye smiling men,
For false men's faithlessness, shall pitied be,
Not spat at by base mouths, o'er wine-cups jeered!—
The mean seducer's triumph shall be—death!—
Or, if in human power, as 'tis in mine,
Live reparation, thus it shall be made—
Lenor, thy hand!—Bring in, good Raoul!—thou knowst!—
The prisoner.

RAOUL.

Bring here, my Lord?—

PHILIP.

Here, here!—

RAOUL.

Must she be burned!—Alas, alas, alas!—

[*Exit.*

VANDENBOSCH.

Burned, burned, what says he there?—What crime, I say,—
It is impossible; it shall not be!—
Who says it shall? Ha, Philip, is it thou?—
I'll throttle thee.

PHILIP.

Be calm—thou seest I am.

VANDENBOSCH.

Why do I live so long that might have died
Old yesterday?

Enter RAOUL with YOLANDE in chains.—A PAUSE.

LENOR.

Is't she, or her wan spectre?—

RAOUL.

Pray you, Lady!—
'Tis long since air has fanned her bloodless cheek;
She is exhaust.

LENOR.

How on her earth-fixed eyes
Tears hang like dew on purple violets.

RAOUL.

Your curse soon overtook your daughter, Pierre.

VANDENBOSCH.

Curses on thee, on me, and all the world!—
I have no daughter!

RAOUL.

Lady, where are you?—

YOLANDE.

In the sun ; Oh, me,
How whitely all things glare ; trees, flowers, and folk
All made of light ; or is't the wavy sea
Whereon we tread so softly giddily ?
Look how the hard accustomed judge himself
Relents to tears !—All things do pity me ;
The blue stars moisten o'er, harsh eyes relent,
Crabbed faces smoothen, even the festive sun
Looks with a sorrowing aspect on the world ;
Yet I have only lost my way, you see !—
Lenor, Lenor, and dost thou weep ?

LENOR.

Lenor !—

Dost thou remember me ?—

YOLANDE.

Remember thee !—

What art thou ?—Royal Lady, pardon me,
And give me justice !—Nay, but you shall hear me !—
I was a free bird of the woods and sipped
Dew from brown nut-leaves honied o'er with sweets,
Chirruped upon high tops, and met the morn
In the white air that's nearest to the sky,
At amber twilight, on a small twig perched
Slept cradled by the breeze ; and so they came
And set nets for me, silky as the air ;
And once when we were praying in a garden,

She stung me with a kiss!—now give me justice!
Justice, I say; but justice, nothing but justice,
Justice, my royal mistress, on Lenor!

RAOUL.

Justice, my Lord, she asks!—The stake?

PHILIP.

Justice!—

Oh, would you damn the world?—These are not tears
Of water, but of fire, and scald the cheeks
They wet—good soldier, man!—
Pardon to nature one weak moment more,
I shall not weep again.

YOLANDE.

Why do ye weep?—

I pray you, tell me!—Have you lost a lamb?
We'll seek for it; the world is not so wide.

PHILIP.

Take her away, Frans, for the Duke needs proof
To Burgundy—I say, here take her, Frans,
This ruined temple, this most perfect shrine
Whose saint is gone!

FRANS.

'Twere dangerous, my Lord!—

RAOUL.

So 'tis to live, lest we should die; to eat,
Lest we should choke!—I'll go, my Lord.

PHILIP.

Thy courage take the office ; one last look ;
Oh, what a ruin's this!—Yolande!—all lost.

YOLANDE.

Look on me so ; I shall remember you ;
There is some trouble here has troubled all,
All my clear memory's depths ; I am not mad.
Pray you, be not afraid, for were I so,
I would not harm you, sir, for all the world !—
Bring me a lamb to kiss, and you shall see
If it will fear me !—Are we souls in bliss ?
Let not Lenor come hither and with smiles
Hurl us all down the flaming precipices !—
This is my father, Oh, thou kind old ghost !—
See how the tears stream down his grisly beard
Like dew on the hoar thistle, and he sighs
Like a blacksmith's bellows, very heavily ;
Oh, now, Oh, now, there is a ball of light
Bursting within my brain !—where am I, sirs ?—
Thou, thou, thou, thou, art Philip !—O, my love,
My Philip, save me, save me, from Lenor !

PHILIP.

Away !—O, God !—take her hence, Raoul, away !

LENOR.

Philip !—no, Philip ; not that direful man !—
He'll murder her ; nay, nay, I rave, 'tis well !

[*Exit* RAOUL, *bearing* YOLANDE.]

VANDENBOSCH.

I'll get me to my grave, my grave, my grave,
The lazy lubber land, where all men rest.

PHILIP.

Get thee to Commynes, taking half my host—
Yea, and the sounder half!

VANDENBOSCH.

The sounder half!

PHILIP.

Hist, man, I'll tell thee more— [Shouts.
What uproar's this?

FRANS.

My Lord, the mob demand
To see their king!

PHILIP.

Open the gates to them!—

[Uproar. Enter a Mob.]

Sirs, there's the crown among ye; get ye gone;
Slaves, sons of slaves, that would be sires of slaves!—
Creep home, and tell your wives that!—Reasoning beasts!
What want ye with a tyrant? Hence, I say,
And archers, if they shout for kings again,
Shower arrows on them!—there'll be left enow
To people the rank earth; for you, great sirs,
Be careful what ye do; I am set now
On desperate purposes, and if ye cross me
Though but in thought—but I'll not threaten—hence,
And he who sends me not his rate, I'll have
His head, or he shall mine: and so, farewell!

[Exeunt.]

END OF ACT III.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Court of CHARLES VI. at Arras. An Anti-chamber.

RAOUL—YOLANDE—A MONK.

RAOUL.

Hist, Yolande!—This holy man will conduct you to the presence of the great Duke of Burgundy—keep well to the tune of our devised tale. Disavow all that he has written of the young Count, and turn back his accusations on himself and Lenor: love and revenge will contend which better to recompense thee.

YOLANDE.

Revenge—on Philip?—Deem you, reverend father,
That for a lawful end, it is a crime—
But what know priests better than oracles
That speak within our bosoms? Let us on.

[*Exeunt YOLANDE and MONK.*

RAOUL.

I have surely a head to circumvent the fiend!—who but I could have coaxed a woman—one half-mad too—into such reasonableness?—But to our nets—here are more birds.

Enter the COUNT, PHŒBUS, and LAVAL.

All's well, my Lords; she is even now at conference with the Duke.

PHŒBUS.

How shall I thank thee, O, thou best of villains!—
This better venges me
Than could my sword though blushing to the hilt
In his heart's ruddiest vintage!

COUNT.

Let Burgundy look sulky as he will
This marriage yet shall be; yet, good D'Harzelle,
Something it troubles me;—I would not have
The rogue who hath discrowned me, wed Lenor.

RAOUL.

So, your grace loves her still?

COUNT.

I cannot sleep
O' nights, to think how he does; yet I hate her
Worse than my coffin.

RAOUL.

Sir, she dares not wed him;
I hold her in the talons of a fear,
And with your grace's feigned reply of love
To her unsent submission, I will make
A wedge to rive their hearts asunder; too,
Give me but gold and promises at will,
These base-born captains, their mob-chiefs of his,
I'll buy as cheap as best nobility.

COUNT.

But hast thou thrown the firebrand into France,
And sent those men, that wait thee on the skirts,
To ravage Sechlin ?

RAOUL.

Yea, my Lord, I have.

COUNT.

Then hence, or Burgundy may doubt some play
Of ours in this compact,—look where he comes.

[*Exeunt* COUNT, PHŒBUS, LAVAL, and RAOUL.

Enter the DUKE OF BURGUNDY, YOLANDE, and the
MONK.

BURGUNDY.

Such vile unknightly treason, murtherous lust,
My daughter shall not wed, nay, surely would not,
Yet she is woman ; fear not, wretched thing !
If thou art true.

YOLANDE.

My Lord of Burgundy,
I am not false ; but what have truth or right,
Justice or faith, to do in men's affairs ?—
Since only by this craft I saved my life
To speak the truth, Heaven pardon the offence !
My wrongs and innocence let Philip know,
And write them on my gravestone when you will.

BURGUNDY.

She makes mine eyes as salty as the sea ;
I'll to our bridals here within. Stay with her.

[*Exit* BURGUNDY.

MONK.

Be of a better comfort, hapless daughter!
Things at the worst must mend, and darkest skies
Oft break with golden light.

YOLANDE.

Let the worst come;
'Tis but to say, the worst is o'er: no more.—
I am a creature mildewed with a curse,
One that drank not at Sorrow's goblet, but
Her broach.

MONK.

Hush, hush, they wrangle loudly,—there!
Loud as the waves, speaks stormy Burgundy.

BURGUNDY. (*Within*).

Nay, an ye face me out,—within there, ho!
Your grace shall see this wronged mortality.—
I had rather wed my daughter to a tinker,
Than such a noble.

KING CHARLES. (*Within*).

Uncle, uncle, softly!

*Scene opens. The KING, BURGUNDY, the COUNT,
PHŒBUS, LAVAL, and Attendants.*

BURGUNDY.

Fear not, thou much wronged innocence; I am here.

YOLANDE.

What should the hopeless fear?—Oh, pardon, pardon,
That my rash sorrow makes me bold to break

Formal respect, and awful homage, due
Unto your mightiest presence, King of France!—
But I must hasten over ceremony,
Lest my heart break ere I have time to speak.—
If He above be just, and thou, on earth,
His sworn lieutenant, justice, justice, king!

BURGUNDY.

You are crowned to give it, nephew!—how now, sirs?

COUNT.

My son, 'tis false, Oh, say 'tis false, my son!—
Cross yourself, son, Oh, throw this witchcraft off!

LAVAL.

What, shall this cursed breedbate, this sham Helen,
Ruin thee and preserve her Philip too!

PHŒBUS.

Who's here calls Phœbus traitor, ravisher?—
Back in thy teeth, if thou, proud Burgundy!—
Thou liest, witch! take up her quarrel who will,
Here is my glove; I'll battle him to death!
Now say your says, for I have done with mine.
[*Throws down glove, and exit.*]

YOLANDE.

Give me this glove, my Lord, if I find none
To champion me, it shall not reck me then,
And I will yield me up to any death
My Lord, the Count, can in his wrath devise.

BURGUNDY.

So shall it be; monk, see her safely sped

With gold to hear her charges ; if none else,
By Heaven, I'll be your knight !—And so God speed you.

[*Exeunt YOLANDE and MONK.*]

COUNT.

So then great Burgundy is not for war,
And peasants shall possess his heritage.

BURGUNDY.

Aha, good father-in-law, this Artevelde's star
Has night-extinguished yours where'er they met,
For is not this new haughty paramour
That queens it—your famed vassal—Madam d'Ardennes ?

COUNT.

It skips my memory, cousin ; in my time,
I have had many fair fools in my arms.
He is welcome to my husks, yet, by this light !
Had he a million lives, and I as many,
The last shall find us mortal combatants !

•

BURGUNDY.

Now, by St. Denys ! had I lost such beauty
It would not skip my memory night nor day !

KING CHARLES.

O, uncle, often have I heard you say
A French king's crown should be a helmet, yet
You will not let me win my spurs.

BURGUNDY.

Ha, so,

Young war-hawk ; we'll soon let you know our mind !

News, news, my Lords, and war for certain now ;
Marauders, from the siege of Oudenarde sent,
Have entered Tournay, burned us Sechlin down,
Ravaged some villages, which though the extreme
And outer limbs of France, to honour's thought
Are mortal as the heart !

KING CHARLES.

Uncle, Uncles !

Must we stand smiling till they pluck our beards ?—
But I have none to pluck !

RAOUL.

Sire !—my good Lords !

Peace, peace, we want but peace and justice, sire !

BURGUNDY.

Justice, thou knave !—enough to hang thee, faith !—
My liege, 'tis time to quench this spreading flame
Which else will wrap the mightiest monarchies,
And lay all true nobility in dust !—
For, from these Flemings' gain, the mutinous base,
In every land, show high and insolent front ;
Disdain the nobles' dues and seigniories ;
Talk of their rights, forsooth, would bear no tax
But such as their own phantasies impose ;
Yea, all degrees, and orders, and conditions,
As of one mother born, would equal make :
And now in Gaunt, the discontented thoughts
Of the mad humorous age, have reached a head
Which either by the sword must be cut out,
Or the estate of the world is mortified,
And all our glories done.

LAVAL.

War, war, then, war!

BURGUNDY.

Lords, to the Parliament; we'll teach their will.
Come, my good father!—Dogs of Gaunt, hie home,
And tell your senders that the King of France
Is on your heels to do ye right enough—
And keep your heads till then.

RAOUL.

Heaven send, we may!

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*Flanders; before Oudenarde. PHILIP, LENOR, FRANS
ACKERMAN. The MAYOR of GAUNT, and others, kneeling
in chains.*

LENOR.

Mercy, dear Lord!—

PHILIP.

Mercy, light of God!—
'Ten minutes' shrive, and to the axe with them!

FRANS.

But these poor knaves, my Lord, that stopped the wheat
Entering in Oudenarde, thought to do you service.

PHILIP.

I bade it pass!—I will have Oudenarde held

As sacred as the sun, Heaven hung so high
Lest one of us should put it in his pocket,
And dole out light for halfpence!—Off with them!—
They are traitors 'gainst their children!—I'll not spare
One traitor, high or low, though Flanders be
As desart as the sands slow camels cross :
To the Provost Marshal with them, one and all !
[*Exeunt FRANS and Prisoners.*

LENOR.

But this is harsh, my Lord !

PHILIP.

Why so, let be ;

Philip's relenting part is petrified,
All marbled over with ingratitude!—
Since they are beasts, as beasts I'll govern them !
By the strong clasp of terror must I hold
My host of sand together ; and yet now
This ocean thought of mine is on the brink
To oversweep the earth ; men shall not say
I have raised a spirit mightier than my spell,
Albeit they use their freedom 'gainst me now
As Atheists do their reason 'gainst its Giver.

LENOR.

On their ingratitude, Heaven should weep fire!—
And yet I told you all : The cloddy peasants
Side with their lords ; like prisoners long fettered,
Unchained they feel but aches, not liberty.
The cities murmur and grow mutinous ;
Ay, even your great rejection of their crown
Persuades you plot some treason with the Count!—

Oh, rather than with goodness govern men
The rude waves shalt thou herd with crook and pipe.

PHILIP.

Well; like an actor in a theatre,
Noisy and clamorous, that will not hear,
I'll play my part out, though the thundering gods
Bring down Olympus!—This is player rant,
But I will keep the tune.

LENOR.

But wherefore spare
This Oudenarde, like a too ripe peach, that's ready
To fall unplucked?

PHILIP.

You'll keep the secret,—woman!—
For you have secrets too, else wherefore now
Delay the church's sanction to our love,
Sith we have dispensation?

LENOR.

Dear my Lord,
To love like ours, what can add ceremony?

PHILIP.

Trifles— which you once valued; let it go
With all the rest!—My wife, Van Artevelde's wife,
Would be less welcome to the Count than—well,
The word is base.

LENOR.

Thou canst not doubt me, Philip?

PHILIP.

If all things else desert me, why not thou?
Thou hast been true to me as long as truth
On earth should last, until men need it,—now
Leave me with all the rest, and let me die
Desolate as one upon a promontory.

LENOR.

You weary of me!—well, I will go hence,
And trouble you no more; farewell, my Lord.

PHILIP.

Come back, thou fatal loveliness, come back!—
Be false, be perjured; let the assassin in;
Upon thy bosom's warm snow slay me, and
I will die kissing death.

LENOR.

Nay, let us part,
You are weary of me; 'tis an ancient truth,
Love hath his seasons like the changing year:
First comes the spring, when Love's pale modest buds
Dare scarcely peep lest frosty winds should blight;
But in the green-hued sunshine bolder grown,
He spreads his flaunting blossoms broad as day:
Then comes the summer, love's ecstatic flush
Of ripe imaginings and full-blown hopes,
Feeding on light, possessing and possessed,
Faint with excess like violets in the sun,
And not a wish beyond; but lo ye now
The yellow leaves of dull satiety!—
It is love's autumn now, and soon succeeds

The hopeless, sunless, leafless, bloomless winter ;
But to the winter of the soul, what spring
Shall ever come again ?

PHILIP.

I tell thee, love,
I love thee so, that only, could I make
That word eternal, could I say how long.

LENOR.

And yet you trust me not ?

PHILIP.

I'll trust thee, then ;
If thou betray me, 'tis not me alone,
But all mankind : This Oudenarde is my bait
To lure the doubtful French, in winter's teeth,
To march, who else would bide the hawthorn's bloom.

LENOR.

Need we the French in Flanders, while these treasons,
Like earthquake fires, break out where'er we tread ?

PHILIP.

I need them on the Lys, whose marshy waves
Shall battle on our side, for not a bridge,
Save Warneton and Commynes stands whole to-day.

LENOR.

But what if Vandenbosch—

PHILIP.

No, he is true,
Though he be sulky ; let me have them there,

I'll light a blaze upon their heels shall make them
Turn head and run between the wolf and sea.

LENOR.

And all these ragged embassies!—You mate
With the mad Jacquerie which is now in arms,
Against all rule, in many lands around?

PHILIP.

In every land
Men but await the hour and the man,
And both are nigh : France marches on me, yet
Paris, his royal seat, is scarce kept calm
With pike and spear, and levelled culverin ;
His mighty brother, England's, throne is loose
Though Tyler's head rot on his palace gates!
Such cruelties, oppressions, woes, and crimes
Have wearied Heaven ; and, calm as all things seem,
An earthquake groans beneath the silent surface :
These poor men whom you see, these landless knaves,
These are my thunderbolts, which I will launch ;
Give me the gods but time, I'll do the rest.

Enter FRANS.

FRANS.

My Lord, assured tidings that the French
Are marching.

PHILIP.

Have you no worse news ?

FRANS.

My Lord,
Cassel, Bourbourg, Gravelines, Dunkerk, Poperingue,

Malines, and all the frontier towns, have yielded,
Seized on your governors, and given them up,
And they are all beheaded by the French!

PHILIP.

Henceforth I'll make no prisoners.

FRANS.

Sir, the town,
Taking strange courage, with a lusty sally
Beats up our trenches.

PHILIP.

To desert me

Now when I needed most!—We'll look to it;
Come, Frans; the pear is ripe; we'll pluck it now.

[*Exeunt PHILIP and FRANS.*]

Enter RAOUL.

RAOUL.

Lady, I have but half an hour the start
Of evil news!—

LENOR.

Is Yolande....where is she?

RAOUL.

Would she were in the centre!—

LENOR.

Oh, thou wretch!

Thou hideous monster of all cruelty,
Thou hast not dared to harm her?

RAOUL.

No, she lives
To pluck us by the roots; homeward she hies,
And all France knows our black conspiracy.

LENOR.

Thou poor abortion of a villany!
Thou hast not suffered this?

RAOUL.

She cheated me,
With feigned consent to Phœbus's rich bribes;
Philip, by this, knows all.

LENOR.

Why, let him know it.—
Think you when I did play at dice with fate
I did not know that 'twas to win or lose
All?—All is lost!—and now I pay the forfeit.

RAOUL.

Tut, tut, you rose-lipped women can persuade
The sootiest devil is as white as snow.
I fear I am despoiled of my command,
By my mad mutineers' rash deed in France;—
Get me thy dotard's pardon, or by Heaven,
Nay, but by hell, I will proclaim your grace.

LENOR.

Proclaim me, ay, proclaim me!—Do thy worst;
I challenge fate.

RAOUL.

Hush, hush, he comes; be calm!

Enter PHILIP and FRANS.

PHILIP.

What have I done to wean their hearts away?—
They will not stir; resist me, nor obey me!—
Is it this truncheon which themselves bestowed,
Or these vain gauds of office?—At the first chill
Of winter to all leave me!—This is strange:
These weak walls fright them with their senseless stones,
Or there is treason; ha, who mutinies?
Dog, is it thou?—Ah, Lady of Ardennes!
What say you now? What tale is this from France?

LENOR.

Not ill-contrived, my Lord, and nicely fitted;—
The County's nuptials with fair Rosabel
Have wrought her to this madness.

PHILIP.

Prove it so,

Or, or, what shall I?—Oh, but this shakes my soul
Clean off her centre!—If this be
My nature will go wolvis, and all tyrants
Shall pattern them from me!—But on the brink!—
Oh, now the inhumanity of fate!—
Ingratitude, ingratitude! indeed
Earthsick I am, as landsmen of the wave!

LENOR.

Oh, yield not thus to common shews of sorrow:
Are you a hero?

PHILIP.

No, I am a man.

RAOUL.

My Lord, the Ambassadors from England come.

PHILIP.

Ambassadors!—ten thousand men-at-arms?—

RAOUL.

Whip we such cozening, half-hearted knaves,
That are not with, nor for, nor yet against us!—
But some poor sixty stolen here from Calais,
For love of arms and lack of wit.

PHILIP.

Ha, Raoul!—

I bade thee never cross my sight again.

RAOUL.

My Lord, I own it, but my grief made bold,
And sudden news,— Dear Lady, speak for me!
If I must suffer for a fault not mine,
Let it be in your service; let me die,
Not of a broken heart, but honest wounds.

LENOR.

My Lord, this man is faithful, ev'n too true,
And truth and faith, like winter roses shew,
In men's misfortunes, sweetest,—pardon him.

PHILIP.

Go, thou hast all thy dignities again,
Thou hast not wronged me to affront the French.

RAOUL.

How shall I thank this?

PHILIP.

With ingratitude,
And be o'th' fashion ; now, sirs, muster arms ;
I will example treason, like the lightning
Visit these too quick rebels, and let see
'Tis not the crown that makes the sovereign.

[*Exeunt FRANS, Soldiers, &c.*]

LENOR.

Leave you me thus ?

PHILIP.

Look, if thou liest, love,
Keep me still in belief, or I must slay thee ;
Indeed I must, for wert thou not a thing
Blacker than hate can call thee?—I'll not think—
That day I went to Bruges——set my soul
At rest that aches in dark uncertainty ;
Say, thou art true, and I'll believe thee 'gainst
Down-heaping thunders.

LENOR.

I am true to thee.

PHILIP.

Why then we'll knit our loves in adamant ;
Like children on a flowery precipice,
We'll play with death and laugh.—Wed me, Lenor !

LENOR.

Oh, Raoul !—

RAOUL.

Madam !—

LENOR.

I'll fear no more!—

Darkness and death be pages to our feast;—
That day which sees the French to us opposed
Shall pale the torch of our unstarred espousal.

[Exit.

RAOUL.

Not wedded yet!—

PHILIP.

We'll crush these rogues, I say;
We still have hopes;—our years are in their spring,
When hope goes maying!—yet who could have thought it,
That heard them shout at Bruges? 'tis too much!

RAOUL.

My gracious Lord, it is!—it is indeed;
Such treason and such base ingratitude;
I'll out with it, let kill me if you will.

PHILIP.

What say you?

RAOUL.

Spiteful old song, but true!—
'When strawberries in the ocean grow,
Red herrings in the wood,
Then shall astrologers behold
A woman fair and good.'

PHILIP.

Villain, dost flout me?

RAOUL.

When I grow so bold
Heaven make the rest of me of brass!—My Lord,—
But you'll be secret; she's so devilish,
That should she but suspect—

PHILIP.

So devilish!—

RAOUL.

Read here, my Lord; this scroll is from the Count;
They bribed me, as they thought, with promises—
In treason's mart, she has forestalled the crowd.

[Gives a letter.]

PHILIP.

Now come the all-ending clap!—I'll read no more.
Had all things else betrayed me—thou, Lenor!—
There's no such thing as faith.—Henceforth, farewell,
Thou coward virtue, woman-eyed clemency!
I will forget what mercy means, and rage
Wilder than ocean when it tosses up
War-ships like walnut-shells!

RAOUL.

It pities me,——
For I know women's faithlessness who are
Inconstant as the quivering aspen's shade
In sunny waters.

PHILIP.

Oh, inconstant, Raoul!—
This calls all forms of faith, and trust, and love,

Invented lies to cozen fools.—Oh, Raoul,
Thou kind true man! I doubted thee the most,
And find thee only true!

RAOUL.

Heaven, else, be just!

PHILIP.

Come, come, we'll con old saws and comfort us :—
'Twas ever thus that, when the autumn came
Unto men's full-blown fortunes, like the leaves
Which blustering winter severs from the oak,
False friends would fall away ;—but He still lasts,
And wrestles with the angry Heavens until
The spring returns, and straight he buds again,
And spreads as green as ever!—So will I.

RAOUL.

My Lord, here is my heart!

PHILIP.

Nay, nay, I'll hence ;—

I am alone now in the universe—

I have no time to weep ; what they have made me,
Such will I be—remorseless as themselves.

[*Exit.*

RAOUL.

Why, that is he!—this comet, whose black light
Puts out the sun of kings!—I'll be revenged ;
If he is not crazed,—I'll write him so
Here in my private tablets : now to work :
My plots live but in egg-shells ; must be hatched,

Or long divorce, good headpiece, shall we make.

I'll be revenged!—And if I said so before, let it be on record that I spoke truth twice on a Monday.

[Exit.]

SCENE III.

*The Bridge of Commynes, on the Lys; it is broken down.
On the opposite shore the Flemish camp is visible.*

*Enter KING, BURGUNDY, COUNT, PHŒBUS, LAVAL, and
YOLANDE, in the garb of a pilgrim.*

BURGUNDY.

'Twere a year's labour to repair the bridge!

LAVAL.

And another to win it 'gainst these stubborn serfs!

KING.

And can a ditch stop sixty thousand men?—
I wish I had my angling boat here, uncle!

BURGUNDY.

And Philip tramples down our friends like grass.—
We have been badly advised to take this road—
We thought, Lord Phœbus, that you knew the road?

PHŒBUS.

Had the bridge stood, your grace had known it too.

BURGUNDY.

De Coucy, then, we turn to your advice,

And must our painful way retrace to Tournay,
And cross the loyal Scheldt.

PHŒBUS.

My Lord, 'tis late ;
The vanguard have arrived, and pitch their tents :—
It will throw the masses pell-mell, if we turn
Our van to-night.

BURGUNDY.

Let them halt here till morn.
Lords, to his grace's quarters at Marghette.

*[Exeunt all but PHŒBUS, LAVAL,
Attendants, and YOLANDE.]*

LAVAL.

My Lord, the sun sets ; will you to your tent ?

PHŒBUS.

Not till I have taugt this valiant Vandenbosch,
What 'tis to be a hellish witch's sire !—
The boats, the boats, Laval !—I am nigh choked !—
I have found two boats, two old and leaky boats,
Heaped o'er by Flemish fishers in the sand.

LAVAL.

Call back the dukes.

PHŒBUS.

Upon your lives, none stir !—
Still timorous age would daunt our enterprise ;
We are enough to share or lose some fame,—
The purple twilight and yon misty wood

Will hide our landing; come, sirs, to the boats;
Give me my helmet; I will cross the first.

LAVAL.

And I'll not be the last.

Cries—Nor I, nor I!

[Exeunt PHŒBUS, and others.]

LAVAL.

Go, bid our archers line the higher banks,
And keep stray eyes employed. Good varlet, go,
And tell great Burgundy, what thou hast seen.

YOLANDE.

Oh, my lost father!—I'll cross too, or die.

LAVAL.

What pilgrim's this?—

YOLANDE.

I have a vow; I pray you!—
This cross pleads for me!—

LAVAL.

Let him come; 'tis luck.

[Exeunt omnes.]

Enter KING, BURGUNDY, Court, &c.

BURGUNDY.

Are we too late to stop this flood of madness!

Ha, St. Ives, ha, St. George, ha, our Lady, crossed!—
The flower of knighthood in such jeopardy!—
Fools, madmen, idiots, apes! my choicest men!
Oh, wherefore am I constable of France!
Knights, nobles, cross in Heaven's name, to their aid,
Or these false peasants will slay all!—O, Phœbus!
St. Py! Laval! and Rohan! I did deem ye
Men of some sense, but ye are madmen all!—
Give me my banner; who will follow it?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.

*The Flemish camp. VANDENBOSCH, FRANS, and
divers Chiefs.*

VANDENBOSCH.

I prithee, John, go watch; all but the guard
May slumber now; the French seem hushed and weary.
I would this bleak north wind might freeze them up
Stiff as their armour; send some messengers
With news of how this day has borne the brunt:—
Where deem you, he is now?

FRANS.

At Ypres, happen;
But like a whirlwind, he is come and gone,
Sweeping rebellion down in every part.

VANDENBOSCH.

I wronged him much to shelter those false rogues!—

FRANS.

But keep the Lys; all will be well again.

Enter YOLANDE.

YOLANDE.

To arms, to arms! the French have crossed the river!

VANDENBOSCH.

The devil hath lent them wings then—who art thou?

YOLANDE.

By all the saints!—they have crossed—in boats, in boats!

VANDENBOSCH.

Why then, they must be knee-deep in the marsh,
And let the north wind freeze them there!—*Ha, shouts!*—
Think they to lure us from our trenched strength
To pell-mell in the marshes?—Leave them there;
We'll mow them down at sunrise, fast asleep,
Deep in the snow.

YOLANDE.

They march, they march upon you.

VANDENBOSCH.

To storm us in our camp?—*this is too much.*
Blow, trumpets!—ha, their Bourdeaux spears are long!—
Come, sieurs, we'll make a day for rogues at home
To prate of round the blacksmith's windy forge.

Enter a CAPTAIN.

CAPTAIN.

Pierre, our men are flying!—

VANDENBOSCH.

Shame on thee,
To live and say so!—Gaunt, to the rescue, all!—
[*Exeunt VANDENBOSCH, FRANS, and Captains.*
Shouts and confused uproar.

YOLANDE.

Alas, where is he?—Oh, the knights' long spears
Sweep all before them!—

Re-enter VANDENBOSCH, wounded.

VANDENBOSCH.

Rally, rally,—Oh!—
Base hares to fly before lean dogs of France!
[*Falls.*

YOLANDE.

My Lord!—my dearest Lord!—how is it with you?

VANDENBOSCH.

Why, bad enough; how goes the fight?—canst see?—
Mine eyes are thick with blood.

YOLANDE.

All's lost, all's lost.

VANDENBOSCH.

Oh, what will Philip say to this?—Beasts, beasts!—
Give me a sword! set fire to Commines!—Sound
The tocsin!—Stand!—I say, stand, rogues! stand, dogs!—
Curses upon this gap; I bleed away.

YOLANDE.

Oh, lean on me; indeed I am very strong!

VANDENBOSCH.

Prithee—I do grow very weak,—I say,—
I had a daughter.—Oh, what wants old age
To live for ever?—My day's work is done.

YOLANDE.

Oh, father, father!—fly with me, O fly!—

VANDENBOSCH.

Who calls me father?—Oh, how like thou art;—
But my curse killed her.

YOLANDE.

No, I live, I live!

I am thy child, thy Yolande!

VANDENBOSCH.

Prithee, kiss me,
And let's to Heaven!—Did they murder thee?—
Bless thee, poor soul! where art thou?—

YOLANDE.

Oh, I am here:—

His eyes are dark!—But yet one grave at least!—
Oh, for the strength of Hercules to lift him;
Yonder some yet make stand; help, friends, help, friends.
[Falls.]

SCENE V.

The camp near Oudenarde.

RAOUL and FRANS.

RAOUL.

These are direful news indeed!—Is—
Vandenbosch dead?

FRANS.

Report is many-tongued on the matter.

RAOUL.

And Yolande!—in a pilgrim's habit?

Ha, ha, these are sad news.

FRANS.

In faith, to laugh on.

RAOUL.

Why, 'tis a trick I have, a trick; I laughed at my father's funeral, for all I was the eldest son.—Ha, ha, this insurrection will flame out again.

FRANS.

I fear even for the camp, since Philip is absent, and the rogues are so mutinously driven.

RAOUL.

There are invisible winds at work, raising the waves thus, depend upon it, Frans!—Surely he split the army to betray it.

FRANS.

Say you?

RAOUL.

Then what are these secret messengers from France that await his arrival?—We are going to pieces, Frans;—it were not ill to look out for hencoops.

FRANS.

You are Artevelde's lieutenant; I will second you, as I may.

RAOUL.

Good old soldier!—but withal somewhat dull. We are going to pieces, I say; and for these mushroom captains of ours,—they will rot in the first shower.

FRANS.

Know you aught?

RAOUL.

I know—what should make a wise man take care of himself.—Come will you be one of us?—

FRANS.

In all honesty; what do you mean?—

RAOUL.

Well, so!—Nothing but honesty; what else do men thrive by in this world?—I pray you, sir honesty, take a score spears, and look out towards Gaunt, to know what is astir.

FRANS.

Nay; they are faithful there. [Exit.

RAOUL.

Be not too sure of that,—honesty! Well, be honest and be hanged, as you will. [Exit.

SCENE VI.

PHILIP'S Tent. LENOR.

LENOR.

'Tis ill indeed with me, when every wind

Shakes my heart thus—not aspen-sapped, in truth.
Who is't that calls thee terrible, sweet Death,
Thou tranquil angel, whose blest visitation
Seals up the lids of sorrow, pain, and care,
In everlasting peace?—Come to my couch,
And as a lover, I will welcome thee,
Kiss thee, and from thy frozen lips receive
The kiss of rapturous repose!

[*Trumpets.*

'Tis Philip!

Enter PHILIP, RAOUL, and Attendants.

LENOR.

Welcome, my warrior, home!

PHILIP.

Why, that should be
A cave bestrewed with white-gnawed bones, where wolves
Lie snarling at the lightning.—So, he's slain?—

RAOUL.

'Tis so beprattled.

PHILIP.

Are the news spread?

RAOUL.

And the fear-palsied soldiers herd on them
Like cattle in a storm.

PHILIP.

We'll march to night,

RAOUL.

My Lord!—

PHILIP.

Go bid them strike their tents.

RAOUL.

My Lord,
They'll stir no more than trees.—Through snow and wind,
To march and leave unplundered Oudenarde here!

PHILIP.

Let me see him
Who says, I will not, when I say, Thou shalt.

[*Exeunt* RAOUL, &c.]

LENOR.

My Lord, but these are ill-starred news indeed!

PHILIP.

Not in their love but hate, the gods choose forth
Their marvellous instruments;—Oh, blessed saints!—
To endure all this to be, ha, what to be!—
A grandame's tale, a fireside winter-ballad,
A blazon in a musty chronicle!—
What didst thou say?

LENOR.

Will you taste wine, my Lord?—
Indeed you are very pale.

PHILIP.

Is it not strange,
The freaks that fortune plays? I'll warrant now,
There's some herd geese have butcher hearts, and I,
By nature mild and kind, unfit, unapt,
Am thrust by fortune upon slaughterous deeds!—
Well, what's the news?

LENOR.

Nay, what's the news with you?

PHILIP.

Old as the hills!—women change with the winds,
And men whirl with them!—But for this fight—
Rumour oft swells a skirmish to a battle,
Men's custom 'tis to give much, more, and less,
To little—so will open-handed gift
Send precious gems to crowned pomp, and grudge
The poor sous would make a beggar happy.

LENOR.

Rest, dear my Lord, you need it!

PHILIP.

Ay, but where?—

I'th' grave?

LENOR.

—This heart, whose beatings are all thine!—

PHILIP.

You would have me asleep to murder me, ha, so?—

LENOR.

Van Arteveldt!—

PHILIP.

Act not this surprise!—I know it,—
There's holy example—look at Sisera!—
What's the price on my head?

LENOR.

What means my Lord?

L

PHILIP.

I mean—thou knowst, I dabble in the stars?—
I found it written there, my ruin should be
Wrought by a woman,—once I thought,—but, well—
And that I should not die by honest steel,
But some strange suffocation :—Hist, Lenor !—
'Tis woman's work to strangle in our sleep.

LENOR.

Why this is madness !

PHILIP.

Clap me up with the insane,
The world's my dungeon !

LENOR.

Be of better cheer,
Thy friends, the Jacquerie, are arrived, and wait
But word from thee.

PHILIP.

Ay, there again, more blood !—
What, must I loose them then ? Such desolation,
Such infinite chaos could but come again
Were the great mind of all this universe
To madden in's unbounded loneliness !

LENOR.

Nay, now you rave—and are a common man,
And are not Philip !

PHILIP.

I was a fool
To leave my quiet angling in the Scheldt.—
Thou hast betrayed us, wretch !

LENOR.

Who, I, my Lord?—

PHILIP.

Hast sent the Count word what it is we do!

LENOR.

No, by all things that men call truth, or angels!

PHILIP.

Why, then, I'll slay thee to keep secrecy!—
What, for a woman, for a toy, a straw,
Ruin all mankind!—I say, prepare to die!

LENOR.

Kill me then here!—

PHILIP.

Oh, thou sweet perfidy!—
Thou unimaginably lovely cheat!—
Oh, fool me to the last; and I'll forgive thee!

LENOR.

Thou hast some locked-up sorrow in thy breast,
Some treasure of deep grief which, miser-like,
Thou hoardst, and will not share.

PHILIP.

They tell me now,
Some in my camp betray me.

LENOR.

Fortune's flies
Will shun the dews of sunset.—Where's the pity?—

Why dost thou gaze on me with such intense
And gnawing eye, as one who reads his doom
In the calm judge's face?

PHILIP.

Nay!—my camp?—

My very bosom!—

LENOR.

Whom do you mistrust?—

Raoul?—Ay, indeed!—trust there's misplaced.

PHILIP.

And nowhere else?—

What was it I should say?—I love thee—better—

Better perchance than when I had more words

To tell thee so!———

And as a merchant in his shipwreck seeks

To save his richest wares, though he himself

Sink in the sheafy waves; so I would thee!—

Leave me,—go where the sun shines,—'tis night here.

LENOR.

Lord Regent, what is this?—

PHILIP.

I am a straw

Which idiot fortune, in a merry mood,

Cast on the winds, to laugh at its vexed flight;

And now she is weary;—so am I of her!—

And ye who clapped the sport—why should ye stay?—

Wilt thou not understand me?

LENOR.

Understand thee?—

No, nor myself, nor anything on earth !

PHILIP.

My sea of glory ebbs to weedy shallows,
And sunken rocks appear. I tell thee, Lady,
I am as nigh to utter wreck as ever
Crazed barque among hoarse-roaring breakers driven ;
Let the crew take their boats ; or to be plain ;
The Count still loves you, hasten to his camp ;
Take all my wealth, for I need nothing now,
And make an early merit, which being late
Is none !—And dost thou smile ?

LENOR.

Why, who am I,

Or who art thou, who listen, or who speak ?—
If thou art weary of me, it needs not
These rounded periods to say—Go and die :
But if thou deemst, because I am a woman,
(Heaven knows, and a most miserable one !)
This pallid-visaged fiend of death affrights me,—
I know not,—and 'tis therefore that I smiled,
To think that thou shouldst think,—there is a death
More terrible than life outliving love.

PHILIP.

Ha, ha, you feast me with good words indeed :—
But I know all !—Come, come, you are for France !—
Here is your passport,—from the Count,—enough !

[Gives letter.

LENOR.

Dost thou believe that I know aught of this?

PHILIP.

Thou seest!—'tis fairly written.'

LENOR.

So it is ;—

Raoul gave thee this?—

PHILIP.

Thou hast a nimble wit.

LENOR.

O traitor, traitor! mildew-shedding traitor!
Dear Heaven! but this is just. Who shall put faith
In woman's honour, gone her honesty?—
I'll say no more, for protestation's cheap,
But that this scroll is false, and I am true.

PHILIP.

I will, I must believe thee, for I cannot
Breathe this earth-air without thee; but be kind,
And never let me see thy falsehood's depths
Till they have gulfed me!

Enter RAOUL.

RAOUL.

Oh, my Lord, my Lord,—
The soldiers will not march, and mutiny!

PHILIP.

Give me mine axe.

[*Exit.*

LENOR.

O, God, his father's fate!

RAOUL.

Stay, stay, there's worse to tell,—Yolande is here.

LENOR.

Yolande!—

RAOUL.

Among the fugitives!—disguised!

[*Uproar without.*]

LENOR.

Stand yet the crystal columns of the sky?

Fall, fall, and smother earth!

RAOUL.

Lo, here he comes!

Enter PHILIP; Soldiers; confused uproar; YOLANDE follows, still disguised as a Pilgrim.

PHILIP.

So sirs, you have't, I've sold you to the French,

These ragamuffins being my bargainers?—

I'll let you judge; go, bring my gentry here.

[*Exit RAOUL.*]

Pilgrim, art thou by way of Commynes?—deaf!

YOLANDE.

By way of Commynes.

PHILIP.

How fares Vandenbosch?

[*Silence.*]

Good soldier, so, good night !—Where wend you now ?—
Something we should remember of your voice,
But dimly in a dream.

YOLANDE.

My Lord, to France.—

I have a vow ; I loved a Flemish maid,
Whose hand was plighted mine, but hearing how
She had forsworn herself, and loved another,
I hither came to avouch the truth with sight.

PHILIP.

And she is false ?

YOLANDE.

As your grace is true.
And therefore like a shadow do I glide
Home to my silence.—Sir, I would not bring
A blight upon her bloom of happiness
And so destroy *him* all !

PHILIP.

I'll have thee shrined,
Sainted, and canonized !—for being a fool.

Enter RAOUL, *with Deputies from the Jacquerie.*

Now, sirs, whence are you ?

MAILLOTIN.

Maillotins of Paris,
From Jacques Bon Homme, the avenger of the poor.

PHILIP.

'Tis thrown !—go tell your lands, I'll keep their masters
Busy in Flanders, till your earthquake bursts.

Be ye Death's reapers, not his harvesters ;
Scythe on but bind not, look not back until
The field is level ; thus far he hath followed
Heaping his shocks, too busy for a smile ;
But we will choke his granary, the earth,
Ere we have done !—Away, be pitiless ;
Burn every castle, fortress, wall, and tower,
Stronghold and refuge of your tyrants, till
Ye have room to breathe : I think to join ye soon.
Now, sirs, is this betraying you to France ?—
Shame !—to your standards, and all follow mine.

[*Exeunt* PHILIP, MOB, and YOLANDE.

Well, Lady ?

RAOUL.

Well.

LENOR.

RAOUL.

I'll find a way with her,
If you will give me warrant !

LENOR.

A way with her ?

RAOUL.

She wends towards France, good fool !—I'll follow her.

LENOR.

Thou ?—

RAOUL.

Nay, but I'll send an apt apology :—
By two fast bloodhounds : whoso finds her then,
Shall blame the wolves.

LENOR.

Thou art the fiend declared,
And I am sold to thee.

RAOUL.

Do you consent?

LENOR.

Come back, and say that I am safe!—No more.

END OF ACT IV.

ACT V.

SCENE I.

The French camp, near Rosebecque. KING CHARLES,
COUNT, RAOUL, PHCEBUS, LAVAL; *Attendants.*

RAOUL.

You cannot force him from these eagle-heights of his, which thrice you have failed in : only my project has hope in it.

COUNT.

How will the world laugh at us, that are so fooled and foiled !

KING.

Would I had such a subject !

RAOUL.

He would not long have a king, sire !—But this very triumph, in my hands, shall prove his ruin. The commons are so flushed with victory that they lend ready ear to my whisperers, who tell them that Philip is a traitor to keep them mewed in their camp while you ravage the country beneath their gaze.

COUNT.

But his captains are all with me ?

RAOUL.

On condition, to keep their ranks.

PHŒBUS.

Muckworms!—to which he raised them.

COUNT.

Promise what you will—the keeping is our own.

RAOUL.

Could we separate Lenor from him, the rest is as easy as breaking cobwebs.

KING.

For what cause do they so love this woman, cousin of Flanders?

COUNT.

Nay, sir, I know not.

RAOUL.

For having a fair outside, my liege, and a sweet way of mouthing, as an she were eating roses.

COUNT.

But are you sure, she believes this Yolande dead?

RAOUL.

Ay, troth, and is nigh mad on it, for all it be her wedding day.

COUNT.

The duke is too nice against our plan; he pities this wandering wretch strangely!—Hadst thou slipped hounds after her, in truth,—

RAOUL.

Nay, my Lord, I knew we should have a use for her, and promised her death but to beguile Lenor from surer means.

Enter the DUKE OF BURGUNDY.

BURGUNDY.

Indeed, indeed, but these are news!—

COUNT.

Well, cousin,

How is your grace resolved?

BURGUNDY.

Why, it must be!—

O, dear my Lords, this is no time to palter
With this new-risen fiend: fell news are come!—
Paris is in revolt!—and everywhere
They burn our undefended castles down.
Châlons, the Marne, Blois, Orleans, Rouen, and
The Beauvoisis, are in one flame of war;
So, if we fight not suddenly and well,
There's not a nobleman nor knight of France
Need ever think of resting him at home.

COUNT.

Then go, good Raoul; indeed, thou hast whitened thee!—
And, know, whoever brings me Philip's head,
Wins all the lands of this hell-witch of his.

RAOUL.

I think to earn't; farewell, my royal Lord,
Great lords of France, farewell.

BURGUNDY.

Good speed, good rogue!—

[*Exit* RAOUL.]

I could be sorry now—but it must be—
To use so false a villain 'gainst this man,
A matchless soldier, or our shame is so.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.*PHILIP's camp, on the heights of Rosebecque.*

PHILIP.

I did not think again to feel the blood
Flow to my heart like music; yet this triumph
Kindles the soldier in me!—This just cause
Makes battle's crimson hands a beauteous sight,
Its slaughter jocund as a harvest home.—
Rage, France! as bootlessly the ocean storms
The unmoving rocks; the skiey Alps, the winds!—
Some fields like this, shake, pitiless tyranny!
On all thy thrones; injustice, old as time
Thy sceptres abdicate; we will not pause
Until the icy north, and burning climes
That spawn the serpent, burst their age-linked chains,
And freedom, universal as the sun,
Smile over all the earth and call it—Good.

Enter RAOUL.

RAOUL.

My noble general!

PHILIP.

Ah, honest lad!—

How like the French these news?

RAOUL.

They talk, my Lord,
To slight your power, and rush on Gaunt.

PHILIP.

Why, then,
I hold them—thus.

RAOUL.

I fear some mutiny!—
These flaming villages....

PHILIP.

It irks me too,
But my raw levies cannot cope the French
On equal ground,—Gaunt is prepared.

RAOUL.

To yield,
At the first glimmer of the Oriflamme:
Old Guisbert's son, 'tis certain, is made mayor.

PHILIP.

Ay:—doltish dastards! think they to keep well
With hound and hare at once?

RAOUL.

The mocking Count
Sends you this withered nosegay from his breast,
To grace your nuptials.

PHILIP.

'Tis a gay old man :—
How ill do antic jests become grey hairs !—
These bridals flaunt the French.

RAOUL.

Well, I know not ;—
But, in truth, such a bargain had long since palled on me!

PHILIP.

Be of thine own humour ; the sky is broad enough :—
Love, if thou wilt, like any summer fly ;
I am of duller mood ; am one whose heart
Must be as full as ocean, or as void
As air.

RAOUL.

But yet, my Lord, you that might woo
At royal beauty, and not fear rebuff,
To link so stained a name !

PHILIP.

Prithee, good knight,
I am to-day i'th' mood of festivals,
But vex me not !

RAOUL.

Yet of this shattered truth
So many parts cohere and fit, that nigh
'Tis whole again.

PHILIP.

What truth ?—

RAOUL.

Nay, Yolande's tale.

PHILIP.

What, dost belie thyself?

RAOUL.

Not I, my Lord ;—

Mine eyes are very dim at distances,
And phantasy oft shapes the thing it fears.

PHILIP.

Speak out, speak out !

RAOUL.

The Duke of Burgundy
Affirms—but 'tis so black it makes me laugh—
Your wife was murdered, here, and by Lenor !

PHILIP.

Murdered !—my wife !

RAOUL.

Give him a pledged return,
And he'll send one shall prove it,—so he says.

PHILIP.

Felon, thou liest, and I'll have thee torn
By savage horses, limb from limb, and scattered
On every wind that blows !

RAOUL.

So be it, sir,

If I fail in my proof !—Your grace remembers
The pilgrim from Commines ?

M

PHILIP.

Why what of him ?

RAOUL.

He vanished suddenly !—

PHILIP.

And what of that ?

RAOUL.

'Twas Yolande !

PHILIP.

Yolande !—

RAOUL.

And—this witness swears—

Slaughtered by bloodhounds, set on by Lenor.

PHILIP.

Bloodhounds !—

RAOUL.

My Lord, look not so far adrift :

Death cancels life, but with it countless woes,
Himself, the worst ; and who would be in love
With toothless, sightless, miserable age,
To grudge the lees of life, the wine all gone ?

PHILIP.

Thou talkest wisely now !—give famine words,
And bid his pangs be still.—If this be so—
I'll not believe but on such proof as might
Attaint an angel, drag him in the gulf,—
But if it be—I loved her, Raoul, I loved her,—

And therefore Heaven repays so heavily!—
From the first witching moment I beheld her;—
But if 'tis true, why then, why then indeed,—
What shall I do!

RAOUL.

I'll bring you proof, my Lord!
Go to these bridals; if I bring it not,—

PHILIP.

Oh, do not bring it, Raoul!—Confess thyself
Incapable, or but too credulous!—
And I have yet a balm in all my woes
To lay upon the very heart of sorrow,
And bid it smile like wondering infancy.

RAOUL.

Will you wed murder then?

PHILIP.

Murder!—O, sun!
But I am Philip: bring your proof or, or
I'll make you mad, to madden me with lies!

RAOUL.

Excellent proof, clear proof, as clear as air.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

*Interior of a Tent. LENOR in a bridal garb. Attendants
busied in arraying her.*

LENOR.

Will ye be never done?—Take off these gems
That shine and glitter like a bloodhound's eyes!—
Hush! hark! who calls?—Nay, it is nothing—nought—
Only a bloodhound's distant bay.—I tell you,
Away with this; I like not its red sparks.

Enter RAOUL.

RAOUL.

Health to your grace, and blessings on this day,
The glut of every wish, whose full lap bears
All flowers of hope and joy to strew your feast.

LENOR.

Are we so happy?—Why then, let us laugh!
Merciless man!—devil, not man!

RAOUL.

What fear you now?

LENOR.

All things and nothing! What can sorrow more?
Nothing: nor joy? I have past the height of both.
Fear!—what should I fear?—tut, I can endure
All that which Heaven or man, on flesh or spirit,
Can in their wrath inflict.

RAOUL.

What should you fear?—

They say, indeed, unconsecrated earth
Cannot hold in the dead ; but you that are
But woman in your loveliness, fear not
These musty legends.

LENOR.

Old wives' dreams !—and deem you?—

But woman !—Oh, they are unblest, are more !

[Music behind.]

RAOUL.

Hush !—though 'tis sweet and full of gaiety,
Some dreary voice breathes threateningly through all !

LENOR.

'Tis an old strain which many a time and oft
My childhood heard ; I pray ye, let me weep,
And this black dream will pass, and leave again
My soul's serenely melancholy peace.

RAOUL.

In a dun wood, whose hot and breathless shade
The brown fly hums in, mangled o'er, she lies—
What fear you ?

Enter FRANS.

FRANS.

Madam, the guests.

LENOR.

Admit them—I am ready.

Scene opens. A gorgeous festival, partaking of a military character; LAVAL, an Abbot; YOLANDE in a Pilgrim's dress, somewhat remote.

LENOR.

You are very welcome all :—where is my Lord?—
What pilgrim's this?

RAOUL.

I see none.

LENOR.

No, indeed!—

O, Lord Laval, you are very welcome here;
This pilgrim comes with you?

LAVAL.

What pilgrim, Lady?

LENOR.

Why, he that's yonder?

LAVAL.

Noble Lady, where?

LENOR.

See you it not?—Why then these eyeballs lie!—
This nothing thing . . . 'tis but a brainsick fancy
Wherewith I am much troubled, for my thoughts
Are full of horrors, charnel houses, weeds!
Hark, hark, he comes—and we'll fear nothing now.

Enter PHILIP, with divers Captains, &c.

PHILIP.

Sit, valiant peers, sit, worthy gentlemen!—
Where is Sir Raoul?

RAOUL.

At hand, and all prepared !

LENOR.

My Lord, your garb is at a bridalty,
But your looks at a funeral.

PHILIP.

Say you so ?—

And would it were mine own !

LENOR.

Your grace is strange !

PHILIP.

Why so are all things else :

I take the hue o'th' times.—That men should stake
Things of immortal value on an hour's !

Strange things are done on earth, and they who do them
Strangely are villanous ; and note, Lenor !

Strange crimes will have strange chastisements, and we,
Who crawl between the earth and sky, should know,
There's One above who looks thro' secrecy,
And sides not with the strong.

LENOR.

Ay, true, ay true !

PHILIP.

Why gaze you there ?—

LENOR.

'Tis nothing . . . yet it seems !—

What needed she the muttered prayer of priest ?—
She makes the ground holy where she sleeps.

RAOUL.

Her grace is held in some strange rhapsody!

LENOR.

Do such things come in sunshine?—yet the Heavens
Laugh out with light, and spread a general smile
Over the earth, so that the warbling birds
Fancy 'tis spring, and woo on leafless boughs!

PHILIP.

Lord Abbot, do thine office; sweet, thy hand!—
Bear witness all, how I have loved this lady.
Like a hot-handled rose, that's thrown away,
Found by a beggar, lo, I lift her now
To wear within my bosom.

YOLANDE.

Oh!—forbear!

LENOR.

What voice is that?—Did some one speak?

RAOUL.

None!—no.

LENOR.

I'll not be mocked; I say, I heard a voice!—
What do these bloodhounds here?—This is not well!—
Keep them off, Philip!—see, their gory tongues
Hang loose with overgorging!—Keep them off!—
They snuff the earth for me.

RAOUL.

Mark you, my Lord!

LENOR.

Oh, they will hunt me to the gates of hell!—
Smile, love, and I am safe; O, dearest, smile!

PHILIP.

Thy thought enacts some fearful tragedy :—
Is't murder?—

LENOR.

Murder!—

RAOUL.

Murder, ay;—is't murder?

LENOR.

Why, she was false, and let the angels prate,
Here is my hand!—

YOLANDE.

Merciless slanderess!
Was I then false that falsely was betrayed?

[Throws off habit.]

LENOR.

Oh, horror, horror, will the ground not gape?—
Slain innocence! if what thou seem'st, thou art!
Or Retribution, armed with fiery bolts,
Spare not, but hurl me down below the shriek
Of the arch-trump!

PHILIP.

Yolande!—it cannot be.

RAOUL.

My Lord, it is; by me preserved for this;

All that she says is true; I was deceived
Most witlessly, to be an instrument.

LENOR.

Thou lie! thou living, breathing, fleshy lie!—
How shall I curse thee, or myself, enough?—
Confess, thou art set on by craftier men
Thus to traduce me to my dearest Lord!
Confess, and I'll forgive thee, yea, and heap
Treasures as infinite as wrath to come
On thee and all thy name, for ever, Raoul!

RAOUL.

Lady, it is too late; fear not the hounds,
You see, she is not slain.

LENOR.

What is to be done?—
Ne'er gaze at me, but do it: here I stand,
And do defy the worst ye can inflict.

PHILIP.

How can revenge keep pace with thy ill-done?—
Pronounce her sentence, my restored saint!

YOLANDE.

Leave her to conscience!—It comes o'er my heart,
How once we were as sisters,—for that love,
Lenor, I do forgive thee.

LENOR.

Oh, thou shalt not!
I will not be forgiven! thou dost this

In tyranny and pride to sear my soul's
Intensest quick!—Oh, strike,
Some here that hate me, or send down thy bolts,
Thou star-throned Justicer! and let me cease.

PHILIP.

Come to my soul, thou miracle of love!
Thus, thus, I clutch thee, and the thunder's self
Shall never separate us any more!

LAVAL.

Pardon, my Lord; this prisoner must return,
Or thirteen hundred prisoners die on it.

PHILIP.

I'll ransom her with untold gold!—

LAVAL.

My Lord,
Not with all yellow veins the dun earth hides;
But yield Lenor—this hapless lady's free.

PHILIP.

Lenor!—unto the Count?

RAOUL.

And pales your cheek
Like the wan colours of a day-eclipse,
To yield her up to punishment,—not love!
The Count hath sworn to burn her for a witch!

LENOR.

Why, these are merry news:—Go bid my lord,
(The Count who loved me,) at the break of light,—

And look the sun is setting!—heap his stake,
Between the camps, high for a sacrifice,
And if I yield me not, the hot-hissing bolts
Have stopped me on my way.

YOLANDE.

Laval, Laval!

I am your prisoner, and let us hence.

PHILIP.

Thine eye holds something very strangely sad,
But, Yolande,—

YOLANDE.

Nay, my Lord, protest it not;
You love her!—Heaven's peace be upon all,
To all farewell!—now am I ripe for death.

[Exit, with LAVAL and Attendants.]

PHILIP.

Thou leopardess of beauty! O thou wretch
Without pareil!—Go, go, and yield thee up!—
Go to the Count! I loathe thee and abhor!
Dost feign that he would burn thee?—"Tis a lie!—
The old man doats upon you still!—a lie
Huger than Atlas!—get you gone to him!
Let laughing Cupids play in all your charms,
Dance in your wavy motion!—smile, but smile!
No, weep, these tears of thine melt men like snow!—
The old man will forgive you!—Get you gone!

LENOR.

Thou hast me here—I am a woman—I—

What can I do to hinder thee?—Make sure,
And in this heart where thine—so oft—where thine—
Strike to the hilt!—I will not balk the blow.

PHILIP.

Go, go ; the Count, the Count!—you have my leave.

[*Exit.*]

RAOUL.

This feast of rich revenge palls appetite :—
Most noble Lady!—

LENOR.

Prithee, where is she?—

My name's Lenor.

RAOUL.

Thou didst despise my love!—
What think you of my hate?

LENOR.

Even as your love.

RAOUL.

By Heaven, I love thee better far than ever!—
And all I have done, was all done to your good.

LENOR.

Indeed!—is't possible?

RAOUL.

Yea, I would die

To pleasure you.

LENOR.

Why, so indeed you must!—
Here's money for the rope ; let it be strong.

RAOUL.

Come, come, this is a foolish ecstasy!—
Triumph and power, all, may be thine again!
Revenge, revenge! the balsam of hurt souls!
His fate, this thankless puppet's, waits your nod:
You gave him all, and asked you all of me,
That tongue's uncoined, in which I could refuse.

LENOR.

Yea, I am fair!—At least but I have known
The sovereign joys which only beauty shares;
Death, hear the boast!

RAOUL.

Rave not, but listen, woman!—
Look, all his captains have subscribed their hands
Unto the Count, and the vexed vulgar follow,
Not him, but you! Do but thou shout to them,
'Philip would yield me up to death,' Lenor!
And we'll see who is master.

LENOR.

Is it so?
Stand yet the Heavens?—Were all men like to thee—
All false, what, all?

RAOUL.

Bought with French gold and words.
Do as you will; his ruin is writ in brass.

LENOR.

Speak not in parables, but plainly, thus:
What is it thou canst do?

RAOUL.

The commons doubt him,
And yielding you to France, shall fire them quite.
We'll seize and give him up, and you shall burn
The Count, I warrant me, ere he shall you.

LENOR.

And yet men talk of faith;—Now know I why
Crooked legs will still wear scarlet:—Sir, I thank you;
Destroy him, and by me?—This is revenge,
Revenge indeed!—O, base humanity!—
I'll trip at dawn to France, so—set your traps.

RAOUL.

And my long-earned reward?—

LENOR.

Seek it in hell!—
I mean your conscience:—nay, I jest, I jest
But Virtue pays herself, or none else do,—
Name it yourself!

RAOUL.

'Twere an old tale repeated,—
Lady, there's paradise upon your lips!

LENOR.

And angels only dare to pluck the roses
Growing in Eden,—we are courtly folks
That meet in sunshine and lisp compliments:
Go, go, we'll talk of love, when Death is dead.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

PHILIP'S tent. *A marshy landscape stretching below.
Mont d'Or in the distance. A charcoal fire burning,
with a rug before it.*

PHILIP and FRANS.

FRANS.

My Lord, there is much turmoil in the camp.

PHILIP.

Let it calm as it will : I will contend
No more with destiny, upon whose waves
Life floats an idle cork.

FRANS.

Your glorious life

Like yonder sun—

PHILIP.

Sets murkly ; ay, good Frans,
Comparison stop there !—When I am gone
Let scholars write my epitaph in sand,
And poor men in remembrance. With what shrieks
The sea-stork passes o'er these salty meads,—
The night my father died, they say, 'twas so.

FRANS.

Think not of that, my Lord. •

PHILIP.

I saw him when,
I took this people's helm.—Would that there were

In any evocation,—but, old friend,
Good night. I'll keep mine armour on.

FRANS.

My Lord,

Good night : God keep you!

[*Exit FRANS.*]

PHILIP.

Well!—I know not why

Mine eyes will track this dying glory down,
As if it set for ever: So it does
To him who dies to night :—Good night indeed
That has no morn!—A thought of infinite peace.—
What shall I trust in now?—Not in myself;
The sovereign, reason, is by griefs dethroned,
And anarchy whirls here!—Would I could rest!—
Is't well to sleep?—Then better still to die,
Best ne'er to be!—The camp is hushed as fear
In secret corners hid : come, sleep, and drop
Thy cold fresh poppies on my lids!—New hopes,
And bright imaginings will come again
With the clear morn ; or be, the thing thou mockest,
Even Death!

[*Lies down : a pause.*]

FRANS (*at tent door*).

Lady, none pass!—

LENOR (*without*).

Slave, I am Lenor!

[*Enters.*]

And sleeps he?—No, this is not sleep, but pain
With closed lids tortured : Philip!—wake my Lord!

PHILIP.

Symon and Guisbert! ha, what want ye here?—
Lenor, my loveliest!—is it then but thou?
Where are those bloody men who beckoned to me?

LENOR.

My Lord, remind yourself:—I am Lenor.

PHILIP.

Nay, nay, their carrion recks me not: Lenor!—
Murtheress!—and glide you in to murder me?

LENOR.

Spurn me to dust, but hear me; nay, thou shalt!—
Great crimes have often great apologies,
But I'll plead none; I loved thee, that is all.—
O, Philip, if thy life be aught to thee,
If thy poor country's weal be dear to thee,
If all thy glories, if thy fatal wife,
If my lost soul, but I'll not plead for that,—
Read this!—I dare not speak it, lest some hear.

PHILIP.

What's this?...can this be?—what, and yield me up?
The men I raised, the people I have saved!—
O, human woe, O, ocean misery!
Flow on for ever, since it must be so.

LENOR.

Thou hast one only hope; to fly to Gaunt:—
Yolande shall follow thee.

PHILIP.

Could love redeem
All faults, thou art as white as sun-touched snow!—
Gaunt is in arms against me; know thou that;
But I will foil them yet.

LENOR.

What canst thou do?

PHILIP.

Such things hath desperation often done,
As beggar wonder!—Hear you a voice that calls?

LENOR.

A voice!—what voice?

PHILIP.

Hark, there's one calls again.

VOICE.

Philip!

LENOR.

I do hear nought—why bristle up your locks?—
Nought but the breathless night that listens too.

PHILIP.

It ices all my blood!—can it then be
That incorporeate Death can utter sounds?
Dost thou remember my dead father's voice,
For such a one it was!

LENOR.

Nay, now you rave!—
There was no utterance; it is your dream.

PHILIP.

Why, come the worst, men die but once :—who calls ?

VOICE.

Philip!—

PHILIP.

I come!—if thou be fate or death,
Thy mission is accomplished ; I have heard thee ;
Away!—I'll learn what trick this is—away!

[*Opens the tent.*]

LENOR.

It is a baleful and a clamorous night ;
The stars peep out by snatches, and blue glares
Course o'er the sky like frightened steeds : how now ?

PHILIP.

What seest thou yonder ?

LENOR.

Nothing!—But the camp!—
Nought but against the sky, the beetling glare
Of the French watchfires ; and the dark oaks
That wave their giant arms upon Mont d'Or.

PHILIP.

Nothing upon Mont d'Or!

LENOR.

But a faint shine,
White as death's smile, that diadems its black bulk.

[*Thunder.*]

PHILIP.

There is an uncorpsed gibbet where the raven
Sits sharpening his beak, and thereto points
Warningly as that morning to the sun,
My father's ghostly form, its axe-clove hand!—
Father, it is too late!—And on that word,
In rainbow circles up to Heaven arise
Legions of glorious ghosts who wave to me!—
Heroes of freedom! yea, your fate be mine!
Wave on, I come; and ye who follow us,
Despair not though unnumbered battle-fields
Roll with the blood of freemen, though the rocks
That curb the sea, by tyrants be exhaust
To fashion dungeons; though their scaffolds' planks
Wear out the everlasting growth of nature,
Courage and courage; earth shall yet be free!—
Is it my sight, or do they fade away?

LENOR.

Your phantasy enacts this dismal shew;
There's nothing but black air; yet, hark a roar,
Like armed men afoot!—What should this be?

Enter RAOUL.

RAOUL.

My Lord, my Lord, my hurry craves a pardon—
The Lady of Ardennes!—

LENOR.

What is the matter?—

Am I so frightful?—

RAOUL.

Sir, the soldiers rise
In mutiny, and for this lady, and
The French are stirring!

PHILIP.

Ay!—the reddening tops
Shew morn is near; we fight the French at dawn.

RAOUL.

We fight the French?

PHILIP.

Why dost thou stand agaze?—
Whom else?—What enemies have we but French?

RAOUL.

My Lord!—Are you then fixed?

PHILIP.

As Caucasus.

RAOUL.

If for the Lady Yolande, it needs not!—
The Duke stood pledged, should you not yield Lenor,
To let her wend where'er she would, and she
Is gone to Bruges, to a nunnery
Vowed to sweet Mother Mary!

PHILIP.

Hear'st thou that?—
O, unmatched goodness! wrecked fidelity!—
Natheless we fight the French.

Shouts (without).—Lenor, Lenor!

PHILIP.

Let those of Gaunt be in the front, Alost,
And Grammont next, the men from Courtray, Bruges,
Damme, Sluys, and the Franconate behind.

[*Mob rush in, headed by LAVAL.*

Ah, valiant friends afoot?—

SOLDIERS.

Death, death to him!—

LENOR.

Unto this Frenchman here?—What wants Laval?—

RAOUL.

What, mutinous men! and will you yield up Philip,
To save Lenor, yourselves, and all the land?

[*Confused uproar.*

LAVAL.

Van Artevelde, as you see, your reign is over,
But valiant Burgundy so loves your valour,
That all your castles, fiefs, wealth, honour, lands,
He gives you on condition you submit.

PHILIP.

What good have I e'er done to thee that thou
Shouldst be the foremost of my pluckers down?—
I need no more land than will cover me,
And that's the beggar's heritage whereof
Law's trickery cannot quirk him!—Hie thee hence,
Thou art in my camp without due warrantry.

LAVAL.

Come, sirs, what say you, will you yield him up?—

SOLDIERS.

Death, death to Philip!—

LENOR.

Death then to Lenor!—

PHILIP.

Let's weep a moment this ingratitude!
I am but one unarmed; let him among you
That hath a public or a private wrong,
By me inflicted, to revenge, step forth,
Here is my heart, and let him strike his steel
Deep as the hilt.

RAOUL (*aside*).

By Heaven, these rogues are salt!

LENOR.

Friends, will you battle for me, with my Lord,
Or must I yield me to the Count's mad rage?

SOLDIERS.

Battle! Lenor! we'll battle for Lenor!—

PHILIP.

Why then, Laval!—Ha, Frans, my faithful one!

[*Enter FRANS.*

Can I still trust thine axemen?

FRANS.

To the death!

LAVAL.

Philip, I do surrender me, and look
For knightly treatment.

PHILIP.

Thou shalt have it, faith ;
Behead him suddenly ; I'll spare no knight,
No noble !—Frans to the block with him !

[*Exeunt FRANS, LAVAL, and Guard.*

RAOUL.

My Lord, this is full strange.

PHILIP.

And stranger follows :—

I did not think to weep again, and yet
Tears spring perforce—I know your honest hearts,
But there are rogues among us ; good my brothers,
There are some envious eaves-droppers who swear
Your captains are not true to Gaunt and me.

RAOUL.

Not true, my Lord !—

PHILIP.

I pray you, hear me out :

I do believe this is a calumny,
As black—as ye shall prove it on this day ;
But, valiant brothers, ye now know your cue ;
If any rascal turn his head away
By Heaven, I'll smite him down to hell myself !

Re-enter FRANS.

Are the French marching ?

FRANS.

There's a snowy mist,
From which gleam pikes and flags and brassy steeds.

PHILIP.

Brothers, the day breaks cloudily, but 'twas
On such a day, I have heard my grandsire tell,
He was at Courtray, in the battle there,
What time your valorous fathers overthrew
Philip Augustus and his countless French :
They keep their spurs in Courtray to this day,
And yonder are their sons, come here to win
Your fathers' trophies back ; and shall it be ?—
Why look ye with sad faces to the ground ?
Ye had more cause that day we conquered Bruges,
Yet ye were full of cheer and smiles and shouts !—
Was it then famine clenched your firm-set teeth
To desperate deeds, and lent your eager eyes
Their lion sparkle, and hath fat content
Plucked out your hearts, or are they left at home,
With scanted gentlewomen and love-sick maids ?

RAOUL.

My Lord, ill omens ushered in this day !

PHILIP.

The storm was high last night, and some report
How round Mont d'Or the playful lightnings ran,
And lit the roaring oaks, and this affrights ye
Seen in the dark and superstitious night ?—
Oh, are ye men ?—Now, by this blessed sun !
I swear your grandames, by their smoky hearths,
Doddering with palsied heads, will laugh at you !—
Get to your standards, and redeem this shame !—
And know that on this day not we alone

.

But Heaven and hell contend ; look on to France ;
A fiery whirlwind chases them behind,
And drives them on our spears. Stand to it then.

RAOUL.

Surely, the rogues mistrust us, sir,—or you!

PHILIP.

God of the universe ! look down and see
What they have made thine earth, what I would make it.
And judge between me and my enemies !—
Away, away !—who halts, halts on his grave !

[Exit RAOUL, followed by the Soldiers.]

PHILIP.

How silently !—The spider, Hope will weave
No more her ravelled web ;—but it must be.

FRANS.

What will it please your grace to ride to day ?

PHILIP.

Ha, truly ; saddle me the black, the black,
The grey is swifter, but I need not swiftness :—
Had I but thought it !—

FRANS.

Sir, the black was slain
But yesterday, and you upon it !

PHILIP.

Ay !—

Truly, I had forgotten :—some few hours
Had made all safe, now is all lost !—the black,
I say, I'll ride the black, what wait you for ?—

Ah, good old man!—yes, thy sole faith redeems
Humanity entire;—Send me the herald
From England that came yesterday.—What news?

[*Exit FRANS; enter RAOUL, and an Archer.*]

RAOUL.

My Lord, the French have seized upon Mont d'Or!—

PHILIP.

Let my good English, and a thousand spears,
Clear me that hill to look around me from.

RAOUL.

My Lord, the English archers who stole here
From Calais, left their armour in their quarters,
And grumble at quilt jackets, and want steel.

PHILIP.

The foggy islanders!—for battailous men
They are as delicate as home-bred girls!—
Thou'rt English, by thy round and ruddy face,—
Go tell your comrades that we have no steel,
So they may get them to their beds again.

ARCHER.

Now, by St. George, if these be French before us,
We'll fight in ragged shirts, ere not at all.

[*Exit.*]

Re-enter FRANS, with a HERALD.

FRANS.

Chandos awaits your will.

PHILIP.

Chandos?—indeed?—

Ah, true, we sent for thee; take me this word
To Phœbus,—in that painted coat, thou'rt safe:
Thou art a traitorous knight and ravisher,
Phœbus Le Haze, and falsely hast betrayed
The lily of the earth for chastity;
And in the proof of that, where'er I see
Thy banner, though hell yawn between us, there,
I will present my body against thine!

HERALD.

And Heaven defend the right!

PHILIP.

Amen, Amen!

[*Exit* HERALD.]

PHILIP.

And now, farewell; thou art my ruin, and yet—
Henceforth farewell, thou lovely guilt, fair spot,
In all creation! Oh, for ever, for
Never throughout all time will we meet more!

LENOR.

No more; ne'er more; for ever, ever, ever!—
What echoes there?—Is it eternity?—
For ever!—make it now then!—But an instant—
O, Philip,—'tis no matter!—

PHILIP.

Faithful Frans!—

You with the Ardennes men, shall guard her here.—
I know what thou wouldst say, but—it must be.

[*Exit*.]

FRANS.

Lady, fear nothing here.

LENOR.

'Tis not to die!—

The moment's wrench of death recks me not :
But to die thus—my nature's good unknown—
Its evil noted—written in calendars—
Something should trouble me!—How fares it, Frans?

[Clangor, and warlike music behind.]

FRANS.

They join, they join!—In still and deadly mass
Our host advance, and like a dismal cloud
With lightning fringed, the French lines compass them!
Yon waves the Oriflamme, and all around
Glitter steeds, standards, knights, and spears away
Beyond the ken of sight! Ah, now the arrows
Fly thick and fast as snow in spring!—
O, valiant English!—Now is all pell-mell,
And Philip, like a madman in a wood,
Cleaves with his axe a way through all their spears!—
Victory, victory!—ha, what seems it there?—
He with the Oriflamme retrieves the day!—
What shout is that?—

Shouts (behind).—Phœbus Le Haze, Le Haze!

FRANS.

'Tis the mad bastard!—how they strive to meet,
But still as through the throngs they cleave a way
Fresh torrents flow between!—Hark, how the blows
Sound like a thousand armourers at work!

LENOR.

If it be true that Thou above art friend
Unto the juster, not the prouder cause!
If ever in the hour of doubt and death
Thine arm hath raised the sinking heart of right,
Now stretch it, or the atheist earth shall dream
Thou art dethroned!

FRANS.

Oh, hideous treachery!

PHILIP (*behind*).

Gaunt, Gaunt and liberty!—be firm!—stand, stand!

FRANS.

Raoul, Raoul! O base, O ignominious thief!
He flies, he flies, our ranks are open laid,
And now they overwhelm Philip!—

LENOR.

Rescue, Heaven!

O, Frans, if in thy veins there flow one drop
Of soldier's blood, charge this false traitor, charge!

FRANS.

And leave you, Lady?—

LENOR.

Leave me, leave me, leave me!
Dotard, I'll go myself!—Soldiers, with me!

[*Exit LENOR, followed by FRANS and Soldiers.*

SCENE IV.

*The field of battle. Alarum. Enter PHILIP, FRANS,
and certain Captains.*

PHILIP.

I will not fly; I say, we'll make a stand;
Oh, most accursed traitor!—where's Lenor?—

FRANS.

Captured, I fear, my Lord!—

PHILIP.

Captured, old rogue!—
Turn, slaves, turn, cowards, turn, degenerate beasts!—
Nobles, your faith is true, and this base flight
Approves them born your slaves.

FRANS.

Sir, you bleed
From twenty gaping wounds!

PHILIP.

No, not a drop!
I will not fly a step to shun perdition!—

FRANS.

Fly, dearest Lord!—

PHILIP.

Wherefore should I fly?—
Go, tell my hapless wife, that Philip died,
Asking but her forgiveness.

FRANS.

See, they come!

[*Exeunt FRANS and other Captains.*]*Enter PHŒBUS.*

PHŒBUS.

Yield!—who art thou?

PHILIP.

One who will not yield

To thee nor all the world.

PHŒBUS.

Philip!—

PHILIP.

He.

PHŒBUS.

Away, thou bleeding wretch! there's room enough
In this red field, for both of us to die.

PHILIP.

There is not room enough in all the world,
No, nor the unmeasured Heavens, for both of us,
But one shall cease!—Thou recreant ravisher!
Thou bastard born, and bastard in all act!—
Thy mother was the devil's strumpet, and
Bore thee to him! Go to thy native hell,
Or keep thy life by better means than it came.

PHŒBUS.

I am glad thou giv'st me back my hate again;
Die if thou wilt, since it was written so.

[*They fight—PHŒBUS falls.*]

O

PHILIP.

So, this is well ; Yolande, thou art avenged !—
There's justice yet :—what, is he dead ?—ay, dead,
As Alexander—or a drowned dog !—
The earth is brainsick, ay, and reels around :—
Courage !—another blow ; I'll rally them !

[*Exit staggering.*

[*Fugitives rush over the stage. Uproar.*

PHILIP (*behind*).

Thou liest, prophecy !—ha, wretches, ha !—
Keep off your horses' hoofs !—'tis I, 'tis Philip !—
My dagger—Oh !—my people !—Now, now, now !—

Scene opens. PHILIP *lying on the field of battle* ; LENOR.

PHILIP.

Nay, they have crushed me—dear Lenor !—for now
It is not guilt to love thee ;—Now, thou sun,
I take my farewell of thy misty beams,
And darkness be my everlasting rest.

LENOR.

And dost thou die !—and am I unforgiven ?

Enter RAOUL, with followers.

RAOUL.

Who will win Ardennes on a much-gashed man ?

LENOR (*springing up*).

Not thou at least !—this pays thee many a debt !

[*Stabs him—RAOUL falls.*

RAOUL.

To die, by thee!—lost Heaven and earth for this!

PHILIP.

Lenor!—one dying kiss—thou hast been mine,
Be never more the Count's!—When I am gone,
Remember me : Oh, let me not all die!
Thy lips are but snow-warm : together, love?

[*Sinks.*

Enter BURGUNDY, COUNT, KING, &c.

KING.

Oh, spare them, uncle, you are far too bloody!—
I did not think to see men hacked like this.

BURGUNDY.

Look for Van Artevelde's body.

LENOR.

Look no further,

He is here.

COUNT.

What gory wretch is *this*?—Lenor!—
I'll have him hung as high as Gaunt's last spire,
Whereon clouds rest, O, envious, cheating death!—
This is the traitor's mistress!—

LENOR.

Yea, this was,
And prouder than to have been thy throned wife!

BURGUNDY.

Pale not with wrath, good Count ; thy peerless son

Has won the fight to-day, and by the rood,
My daughter's his!

LENOR.

Ha, ha, look here!—

COUNT.

My son, my son! It cannot be—it shall not be—
Young Phœbus!—speak, my son! It is not he,
'Tis some one very like!—My son, my son!

BURGUNDY.

Remove the witch—to death with her.

LENOR.

Ha, Duke,
Threatenest thou with death?—threaten with life,
If thou wouldst have me fear!—O, Philip, slain!—
'Twas I that brought thee here; one last, last look,
My love, my life, my all!—O, Philip, thus!—
Thus on thy heart,—Oh, mine!—O, Philip,—Oh!

KING.

Look how her white lips writhe into a smile,
Most ghastly 'tis—Oh, now, there burst her heart.

FINIS.

